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Scottsboro, the Third Crusade

The Sequel to Abolition and Reconstruction

FRANK L. OWSLEY

HISTORY is the collective experience of a people. Wisdom counsels man to focus this experience upon the present so that he may escape the mistakes of the past and be able to gauge somewhat the future. To ignore the past, or to be too contemptuous to master it, is to choose folly as a guide.

America makes less use of the past than any civilized country in the world. It might almost be said to be an American cult, this contempt and ignorance of the past. Ceaseless shifting of individuals, the rapid growth of populations, the coming of hordes of aliens, the idea of "progress" which scorns things of yesterday, have tended to destroy community life and with it a sense of historical continuity. Without this sense of continuity between past and present, history becomes to a people the advice of a wise father to a wayward and inexperienced youth

—the words of a dotard. In America the same mistakes are committed frequently and at close intervals, with no apparent knowledge of former mistakes; and the intelligentzia has led the field, ignorantly plunging over the same precipices where its fathers and grandfathers plunged.

If I may suggest that an act is a mistake when it is followed by results either opposite to what was intended or bad as judged by the accepted rules of ethics, I shall be so bold as to assert that the mistake most often repeated has been the interference of the North—usually the Northeast—with the relationship between the whites and blacks of the South. This interference has continued since 1819, when the Missouri Compromise debate began, until the present day, with periods of respite. Twice, indeed, it has developed into war upon the South: the abolition crusade of 1819-1865 (including the Civil War); and the period of reconstruction. In the present epoch the interference is again rapidly assuming the proportions of a war upon the South. The Scottsboro and Dadeville cases, Judge James Lowell's action in the case of the Negro refugee murderer from Virginia, and the wide-spread agitation involved, are some manifestations of the third crusade.

I feel fairly certain that most of the intellectuals of the East who are leading the third major crusade against the South, and the public whose opinion is being formed by these intellectuals, are quite unaware of the relation between the abolition crusade, reconstruction, and the Scottsboro case. The ignorance and indifference to experience and to human nature which the intellectuals have shown in these crusades is incredible; yet grievous errors committed in sincere pursuit even of ideas of abstract justice might be condoned. But the sincerity of the crusaders is under suspicion; in fact, they leave little doubt that when they have not been sentimental or fanatical dupes, they have been hired tools cloaking motives of material gain in robes of morality. It is ignorance and guile parading as God.

The precise way in which those who are attacking the South today, at Scottsboro, at Dadeville, in Judge Lowell's court at Boston, and in the Northern press generally, are intellectual children and grandchildren of the abolitionists and reconstructionists may not be obvious. Indeed, if I can demonstrate the analogy both of technique and motive between the abolition crusade, reconstruction, and the present agitation for "justice to the Negro" as exemplified in the Scottsboro affair, I shall consider that I have performed a patriotic duty. For I am exceedingly anxious and seriously alarmed over the present agitation. I am aware that a poisoned apple is being thrown, once again, for the two races to fight over; that direr consequences than those of the abolition crusade or reconstruction may be in store for the South and for the nation; and that the relationship between the two races will be more greatly strained than ever by the conflict that is being prepared by outsiders for them.

II

The American Federal Union was established in the full knowledge that two distinct social, economic, and political systems were being brought under one government. The founders of the Union were deeply conscious of the dangers of housing the capitalistic commercial East under the same roof-tree with the agrarian South. But compromises and mutual concessions satisfied both sections that the peculiar interests of each were properly safeguarded. The capitalistic East, however, soon found the compromises and limitations of the Constitution irksome and unprofitable, and it very properly considered the benefits of peaceful withdrawal. Before a withdrawal could be effected the industrialization of the East changed the attitude of that section. New men, raw, uncultured, hard and aggressive, lacking, as the bourgeois class everywhere lacked, any sense of social responsibility, ushered in the Era of Machinery.

These men were ignorant and unashamed, contemptuous of human experience. There was no yesterday for them nor was there any tomorrow in its ultimate sense, only an extended present. Their scale of values was the dollar. Ruthless and pushing, they did not propose to withdraw the industrialized East from the too narrow confines of the Union, but, seeing wide-flung lands paying them tribute as the ruling power in government, they girded themselves and their section to do battle for the control of that Union. They would wipe out the sectional compromises and guarantees, stretch the narrow bounds of the Constitution, and remake the Federal Government. In the accomplishment of this objective it would be necessary either to subordinate or to destroy the agrarian South—the decision was to be left to chance. The New Order had sucked in the politicians and intellectuals of the Old Order in the East—poets, preachers, teachers, novelists, and statesmen. These fashioned for the industrialist East a philosophy of society and government in keeping with its larger ambitions. Webster called the new philosophy nationalism and thereby clothed it with sanctity; in reality, it was a greater sectionalism of exploitation.

The two sections had preserved a careful balance of power during the Old Era. In order to subordinate the South it would be necessary to destroy that balance. But the industrialists, carefully coached by their lawyers and statesmen and "intellectual" aides, realized the bad strategy of waging a frank struggle for sectional power; they must pitch the struggle upon a moral plane, else many of the intelligentzia and the good people generally might become squeamish and refuse to fight. Shibboleths and moral catchwords must be furnished. It was therefore found convenient to attack slavery as an evil and the slaveholder as a criminal, in fact to impugn the morality of the South, in order to create opinion in the East and North in favour of the industrialists' plans of Southern restriction. The practical program of the industrialists was to prevent further creation of slave States from the vast territories which had been acquired by the United States from France, Spain, and Mexico. The political history of the period from 1819 to 1860 is largely the story of the exclusion of the South from the Territories. To hold public opinion to the support of this program the abolition crusade against the South was waged for over forty years. The Garrisons, Emersons, Sumners, and Phillipses—moralists and intellectual leaders—ignorant of the South and of much of human nature, were the spokesmen of the New Order. They were the uncritical propagandists of a system of society as vulnerable, more vulnerable when tested by humane standards, than the society whose overthrow they were preaching.

At the time when Wendell Phillips proclaimed to the world that the South was "a great brothel where half a million women are flogged to prostitution", when Stephen S. Forster denounced the Southern Methodist Church as "more corrupt than any house of ill-fame in the city of New York", and when the Reverend George Bourne insisted that it would be better "to transfer the inmates from the state prison and the pander from the brothel to the pulpit" rather than permit a Southern minister to preach in a Northern church—when, in other words, the moralist crusaders of the Northeast were painting a picture of universal prostitution and miscegenation in the South, information was available to these same moralists which showed sexual degradation in the factories of the East to have reached depths hitherto unknown in the experience of a modern civilized nation.

Illegitimacy was more common in the industrialized East than in any country in the world. Yet these crusaders offered little criticism of a society which forced young girls into semi-prostitution. The professional abolitionists and their transcendentalist brethren of literature and religion glibly pictured the Southern masters as brutes; they drove their slaves to heart-breaking and unrequited toil, beat them like wild beasts, fed them poor and insufficient food, clothed them in filthy rags, and housed them in hovels unfit for stabling horses. At the time when these men who had no knowledge of the South, but who spoke with omniscience of that country, were drawing such an indictment, the most appalling conditions of labour and wages existed in the industrial belt of the East. Children began work in the factories at the age of six and toiled fourteen hours or more under the lash. Women worked even longer hours under the most degrading and unhealthful conditions. Wages afforded the barest existence; there was no chance to accumulate funds for sickness, old age, and times of unemployment. Able-bodied foreign girls were being brought in ships which rivaled the slave-ship of the "middle passage" to take the place of native-born girls who might show less tractability or demand better wages. Unemployment, sickness, old age, had no avenues of escape save prostitution, thievery, and the poorhouse. No sense of security existed among these four million working people (four million in 1860). Yet in the South, which the moralists were attacking, Negro children did not work in the fields before they were ten or twelve years of age; old Negroes were retired from active labour when they began to show signs of feebleness; and both old and young were secured against want and illness. But the crusaders offered little objection to the conditions of labour in their own social system. They and their followers, waging war against a section and a society about which they knew nothing, were immensely satisfied with their own system of society about which they knew much. Their reforming zeal—as that of many in the present day—lay outside the bounds of this society.

The effects of this first crusade against the South were the curtailment of the expansion of that section; the overthrow of the balance of power and the secession of the South in an effort to escape its doom; and finally the Civil War itself. The relationship between the blacks and whites had suffered greatly by 1860 as a result of this outside attack. The incendiary language of the abolitionists was generally believed to be directed toward bringing about a slave uprising and massacre of the whites such as Nat Turner's revolt and John Brown's raid. Their attack resulted in restrictive regulations and closer surveillance of the Negro. He could no longer be freed without the consent of the Legislature; teaching him to read was made a serious offence–lest he read abolition literature and massacre his master; he could not travel without a pass; his religious activities were curtailed lest abolition propaganda be spread; in short all the liberties and privileges which he had gained through the years of civilizing influences were greatly lessened–though his master continued to treat him kindly as an individual. Finally, the South was forced to spend its energies defending an institution which, before the crusade began, it had thought to abolish; gradual emancipation of the Negro with its period of adjustment for both master and slave–a thing which probably would have taken place in the South long before the close of the nineteenth century–was frustrated, and the Negro was finally thrown unprepared as a child upon the world by his sudden emancipation, an act which had the effect of bringing about the ruin, for many years, of both himself and his former master.

III

Neither the destruction of the balance of power nor the defeat of the South in the Civil War assured industrialism of its permanent control of the Federal Government. The agrarian West, though non-slave-holding, had usually allied itself with the agrarian South in the days before the war, and the alliance of these two sections after the war would have turned all the victories of industrialism into ashes. That alliance must be prevented. As long as it threatened, the triumph of industrialism—"the fruits of victory", as Sumner and Stevens were wont to say—was exceedingly doubtful. Once more the blending of moral force and political expediency was resorted to. The enfranchisement and civil and social equality of the Negro were the ostensible aim of this second crusade. The real aim, of course, was to gain political control of the South by the exploitation of the Negro: the Negro was to be alienated from the Southern whites and taught to regard them as his oppressors—a thing which the abolitionists had not succeeded in doing. When this was accomplished the Negro was to be enfranchised and the Southern whites disfranchised sufficiently to give the Negro a safe majority at the polls. The Negro would be taught —in fact coerced if need be—to vote for the industrialist party, now the Republican Party. This would create an alliance of agrarian South and industrialist East.

Such daring plans could not be carried until the public was won to their support—and the Northern public in 1865 would have risen and thrown out the radical leaders had such plans been baldly disclosed at the time. Just as in the abolition crusade, moral aims were now pushed into the foreground. The white man was re-enslaving the Negro, cruelly using him, committing even greater wrongs against him than in the days of slavery. Soon every Northern newspaper was dripping with sorrow for the poor Negro. The intelligentzia was again leading in the pack of propagandists. It did not take long to educate Northern opinion by such strategy. By the fall of 1866 the public was in full support of the Sumner-Stevens program of Negro rule in the South. As for the Negro, he was made to feel that his former master was his deadly enemy. Freedman's Bureau clerks, missionary school-teachers, carpet-bag politicians, all emissaries of the Radical Republican Party —radical only in the South—gathered the Negroes together, armed as for battle, in secret societies known as Union Leagues, where in the dead of night, protected by heavily armed guards who were ordered to shoot any Southern white attempting to approach, they preached to the naïve and childish blacks incendiary doctrines calculated to rouse the wildest passions of revenge against their former masters. They urged the Negroes "to use the torch because the blacks were at war with the white race", says W. L. Fleming. They incited them, says the same author, "to kill some of the leading whites in each community as a warning to others"; the white carpetbaggers, who had heard Thaddeus Stevens urge the same thing, promised that the property of the whites would all be confiscated and given to the Negro. The government, they said, would give the black man "forty acres and a mule" if he deported himself as the radicals instructed him. In short, they encouraged the Negro to commit universal pillage, murder and rape.

Aroused by his white leaders, the Negro marched forth from his league meeting in military formation to commit many acts of violence—though never as many as were urged upon him, for the average Negro was more kindly than his Northern preceptor. The missionary preacher, aside from his work in the Union League, set out to make use of his religious office to rouse the Negro against the Southern white and "to teach the Negroes that every man that was born or raised in the Southern country was their enemy", that "Christ died for Negroes and Yankees, not for rebels". The Freedman's Bureau encouraged the Negro in a similar fashion; so did the schoolteacher. The industrialist political leaders, of course, set the pattern for the moralists and intellectuals. Thad Stevens, who characterized the Constitution as "a bit of worthless parchment", urged that the South be treated "as conquered provinces". Let us, he demanded, "strip a proud nobility of their bloated estates; reduce them to a level with plain men", or better still "exterminate or drive out the present rebels as exiles" and turn their lands over to the blacks. His advice was typical of the doctrines which Congressmen and intellectuals of the East proclaimed. They promised to give the Negro social and political justice—at the cost of Southern white extermination, if need be.

Promised the lands of his white neighbours, promised political control of the South, promised equality and in some instances actually promised white skins, the Negro was fully ready within two years to vote for any program his "benefactors" presented. With the North thoroughly committed to the radical plans of reconstructing the South, and the Negro ready to vote as he was told, the objective of the second "crusade" was easy to accomplish. The enfranchisement of the blacks and disfranchisement of the whites on a large scale resulted quickly in bringing the South under Negro rule which was supported by Federal troops.

The South thus reconstructed probably had no counterpart in the history of the world. The *New York Herald* pictured the situation graphically: the South was forced "by a secret and overwhelming revolutionary force to a common and inevitable fate. They are all . . . to be governed by blacks spurred on by worse than blacks. . . . This is the most abominable phase barbarism has assumed since the dawn of civilization. . . . It is not right to make slaves of white men even though they have been former masters of blacks. This is but a change in a system of bondage that is rendered the more odious and intolerable because it has been inaugurated in an enlightened instead of a dark and uncivilized age". James S. Pike, a Republican journalist, gave a vivid description of a State Legislature during reconstruction: "In the place of this old aristocratic society stands the rude form of the most ignorant democracy that mankind ever saw, invested with the functions of government. It is the dregs of the population habilitated in the robes of their intelligent predecessors, and asserting over them the rule of ignorance and corruption. . . . It is barbarism overwhelming civilization by physical force. It is the slave rioting in the halls of his master and putting that master under his feet. . . . The Speaker is black, the Clerk is black, the door-keepers are black, the little pages are black, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is black, and the chaplain is coal black. At some of the desks sit coloured men whose types would be hard to find outside the Congo; whose costumes, visages, attitudes, and expressions, only befit the forecastle of a buccaneer."

The South was now a rotten borough controlled by the East. Thus reconstructed the agrarian South and industrial East became allies. This, said Stevens, "would insure the ascendency of the union party" (the Republican Party).

Even with Negro governments–controlled by carpet-baggers–installed in the South and the way apparently made easy, the industrialists did not confiscate the lands of the Southern whites, divide them among the Negroes, and thereby fulfil their major promise. Nor did the Federal Government buy any of the millions of acres which were sold for taxes or mortgages (in Mississippi alone an area as large as Massachusetts and Rhode Island was sold for taxes) and give the Negro his forty acres. The land in the South which was sold for taxes would have been sufficient, without violating any property rights, to give every Negro family at least forty acres and thereby a real economic freedom and independence. The failure to fulfil this promise was due to the discovery that the alienation of the Negro from the Southern whites insured the Negro's vote for the Republicans without further expenditure of money.

Yet this was the only promise held out to the Negro that carried any substantial benefits; social equality and political enfranchisement, for the black man so recently emerging from savagery, were delusions. No one knew this better than the "crusaders". Their failure to carry out their only worthwhile pledge to the Negro convicts them of the insincerity of the abolitionist crusaders: they had no real interest in the welfare of the Negro; he was no more than a pawn.

The results of the "reconstruction crusade" upon the relations of the Southern blacks and whites, as has already been partly anticipated, were bad indeed. The hatred against the Southern white engendered in the hearts of the guileless black by the radical agitators in order to get the Negro vote resulted, as I have already noted, in many violent deeds. The black governments—in one State there were two hundred Negro trial judges who could not read their names—gave legal sanction to such violence. The white man, especially the small farmer and the poorer classes, returned the hatred of the Negro with interest. The slave-holder of former days was more tolerant of the Negro's irresponsible acts, for he regarded the Negro as a juvenile race badly advised; but being human, he came to distrust and in many cases to hate the Negro. Despite the military support given the Negro governments, retaliation was frequent and violent.

When the Federal troops were withdrawn, when Northern opinion no longer supported the industrial program in the South, and Negro and carpet-bag rule collapsed, the unfortunate Negro who had been taught by outsiders to hate the whites now found himself alone to face those who had come to hate and distrust him.

The Negro should have learned then that in the end the relationship good or bad between himself and the white race of the South must be settled between them and that no outside power could dictate permanently the terms of this relationship. He was quickly disfranchised by indirection—and constitutionally, for the Supreme Court has not been able to void the legislation by which it was done—driven from politics, brought under rigid social discipline, in short, completely subordinated socially, economically, and politically. The white race disciplined him severely for his conduct during reconstruction. At length, however, with outside interference largely removed, old friendships were renewed between the races; new ones were formed until something of the old affection which had existed between the black man and white man returned. His condition gradually improved; though he has never yet been given back the ballot nor allowed to sit on juries. The experience of reconstruction was too bitter to be soon forgotten. It has formed and will continue for many years to form the background of Southern social and political attitudes. In considering any political action either state or national, the Southern white first considers how that action will ultimately affect the relationship between the races. It has crippled and at times destroyed the political value of the South in the national councils; it has created and will indefinitely perpetuate the solid South, solid against the Republican Party.

IV

The third crusade against the South is now under way. Not that industrialism has not found it necessary since the days of reconstruction to keep alive that dislike of the South which had been cultivated in the former attacks, in order to keep the agrarian West under control. The method is familiar: holding the South up to ridicule as backward, ignorant, unprogressive; waving the bloody shirt during political campaigns; instructing recalcitrant Westerners to "vote as your fathers shot", and giving wide currency to race conflicts and lynchings in the South, while ignoring such difficulties in the North as the Chicago and St. Louis race riots. But until the last few years there has been no serious interference from the outside with race relations and adjustments. Industrial control seemed so well assured that such interference was probably considered unnecessary.

Within the last two years, however, a disturbing attack has commenced in the East. Great publicity is given to alleged injustices committed against the Negro. This new attack does not place so much emphasis upon lynchings as upon unfair trials. That is to say, the administration of justice by the courts of the South is being challenged wherever Negroes are concerned. The common factor in the attacks upon Southern courts is the charge that the Fourteenth Amendment is being nullified in the Southern States by the exclusion of Negroes from juries. The three outstanding examples at the present moment which involve this common factor are the Dadeville (Alabama) case; the case of the Negro murderer from Virginia in Judge Lowell's court in Boston;

and, most prominently advertised, the Scottsboro case. As a matter of fact, there are numerous others, such as the murder-rape case in Birmingham, in which the Fourteenth Amendment is probably being used as a basis of interference in the administration of justice. I am not here concerned with the guilt or innocence of the Negroes—though I wish justice done; I am interested in pointing out the meaning of these cases and of the general emotional disturbance in the East over the "injustices" committed in the South against the Negro. I wish to examine the relationship between this new attack upon the South and the former attacks, and by so doing gauge the probable motives and the final results.

One sees the familiar spectacle of the intelligentzia taking the lead in this new thrust between the white and black man of the South. One reads emotional columns in reviews and newspapers. Such diatribes as that of Mrs. Mary Heaton Vorse in the *New Republic* on the Scottsboro case sound alarmingly like the pages out of a Northern journal during the days of reconstruction; and one might well suspect, in the light of history, that the public mind in the North is being prepared for the identical program. The robes of morality are having the dust and wrinkles shaken off for the intelligentzia and good people to march forth in. One feels assured that industrialism has found the agrarian South once again an obstacle in the way of its control of the Federal Government. But today there are two sets of industrialists: the capitalist-industrialists on the one hand and the proletarian-industrialists or Communists on the other.

The capitalist-industrialists control the Republican Party, which has for the time, at least, fallen into desperate straits. They have within the last few years seen the South and West gradually coalesce until in the autumn of 1932 this alliance overthrew their industrialists' party. The South with its Western allies offers a serious menace to industrialism's control of the Federal Government just as it did before the abolition crusade or reconstruction. That the industrialists have within their inmost secret councils decided for the third time within a century that "Carthage must be destroyed" seems entirely reasonable. Partly ignorant of what their fathers and grandfathers have attempted and completely indifferent as to consequences—because they feel certain that the consequences will affect only the South—they commence their third "Carthaginian War". It must be pointed out, however, that the complete overthrow of the South by abolitionism, war, and reconstruction has been a major disaster to the North itself. The elimination of the South and the political subjugation of the agrarian West by sectional propaganda has had the same effect upon the North as the loss of the "governors" on a steam engine. The North has spent the greater part of seventy years in running wild.

While the ostensible object of the new attack upon the South is the betterment of the status of the Negro, the real object is, as before, to gain power at the expense of both the whites and blacks. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which were used to secure Negro governments and Republican control of the South, but which, as we know, failed in the end, are now to be resuscitated. Under the Fourteenth Amendment Congressional representation and the electoral vote of the South can be cut by one-third; under the Fifteenth Amendment, should the Supreme Court do its part, the Negro could be re-enfranchised. In the first case the importance of the South would be greatly reduced in national politics; with the "enforcement" of the Fifteenth Amendment, the industrialists might hope again to control the South by means of the Negro, who is once more being estranged from the white man.

That the industrialists have declared war upon the South is a conclusion based partly upon circumstantial evidence and analogy. But the Communists who represent the base of industrialism leave us no doubt of their intention. I have their program before me in printed form as I write. They are furnishing the greater part of the energy in this new crusade against the South, at Scottsboro, at Dadeville, and in other places, while their enemies, the capitalists, ignorant of the fact, are acting as allies in spreading damaging reports concerning the Southern white man's treatment of the Negro. This alliance, let me pause to say, presents one of the most amazing situations in history. It is filled with the irony of divine comedy. The cause of our economic collapse is easy to understand when our captains of industry thus prepare their own funeral pyre; for the South is probably the greatest obstacle to Communism. Certainly the Communists—the few who have a sense of humour—must derive enjoyment from the discovery that these capitalists supposed to be fierce and cunning wolves appear to be only dumb sheep in wolves' clothing.

The technique of both Communists and industrialists is the same as that of the former crusaders. It is to discredit the South in the eyes of the North so as to gain support for their Southern programs; while at the same time they are creating as much friction between the races in the South as possible, so as to furnish further outrage-propaganda which the moralists, poets, novelists, journalists—the intelligentzia—may pass on to an increasingly indignant public.

Those engaged in this new crusade of "justice for the Negro" in Southern courts may be divided into the four classes so characteristic of abolitionism and reconstruction: first, the industrialists themselves, either capitalists or Communists, with their smart lawyers and publicity advisers, retained on salary, who work out the program; second, the journalists, publicists, novelists, poets, preachers, professors, who work as paid propagandists (the recent power-lobby investigation indicated that an alarming number of such intellectuals were for sale as propagandists in any cause); third, those who, being victimized by stories of Southern outrages, take up their pens to write in anger against the South, against which they already harbour an animosity inherited from former attacks; finally, the public at large, uncritical, lacking in either historical information or historical sense, ready because of its inherited dislike of the South to believe the worst of that section.

The Communist and industrial leaders, using the same propaganda, the same dupes, are working the uncritical public into a froth about unfair administration of justice in the South. This they do while their own Rome is burning; while the third degree

—mediaeval torture—is used in Northern courts to extort confessions; while counsel is frequently denied the accused until the police and detectives have beaten him into "confession"; while witnesses are "taken for a ride" so frequently that the conviction of a gangster is an exceptional thing; while business daily pays tribute to racketeers as the price of immunity from bombing and machine-gun squads; while kidnapping of children and their frequent murder is a common occurrence; while, in short, the underworld, aided by unscrupulous lawyers, renders the administration of justice in the North a cruel farce.

Once again, from a social system open to every form of criticism—which in fact Europe looks upon as incredible in the twentieth century—comes the attack upon the social system of the South, which is bad indeed as judged by European standards, but which knows little of kidnapping; makes little use of the third degree or torture to extort confessions; does not take witnesses for "rides"; and is not acquainted with the gangster or racketeer except when Capone and such underworld kings of the North pass through.

This propaganda in the North is calculated, as I have said, to prepare public opinion for a program. I have already suggested the possible program of the industrialist leaders. The Communists (proletarian-industrialists) have for their larger objective the conversion of the United States into a Bolshevik State. This is well known. But this program is dependent upon the attainment of many lesser objectives. Should they be able to carry the population of the industrial centres of the North with them, they would still not be able to control the greater part of the United States. The agrarian West and South would still hold, perhaps, thirty-nine States composing the greater part of the territory of the present Union. But Communism, as any other form of industrialism, must have large rural populations to exploit. The industries must have raw material—cotton, iron, copper, coal, petroleum, et cetera; must have food—grain, hogs, cattle, sheep, vegetables, et cetera. In short, Communism, like capitalistic industrialism, is dependent upon agriculture, cannot, in fact, exist without it. Though changing names, industrialism under the title of Communism would face the same irrepressible conflict with agrarianism as existed under the old capitalistic industrialism. What is good for the one is harmful to the other. As the industrialist East in 1819 set out to subordinate the South—and West, so the Communistic East now sets out upon a similar course. That is, it must either weaken and eventually gain control of the South as the abolitionists and reconstructionists did or its program will largely fail.

But the Communists are quite conscious that agriculturalists as a class, and Southerners in particular, have a very strong sense of property. For property in an agricultural society is more tangible than in an industrial society; it is made up of definite pieces of land, with old family graveyards where relatives lie; of trees and creeks and landmarks which for generations have been the daily companions in nature of those who quietly wait in the cemeteries for the Last Day. This sense of property which identifies man and nature so strongly in the South, even yet, cannot be broken down by the philosophy of Communism. When it is realized that this feeling is strong not only among the owners of land, but among the landless tenants, black and white, as well, Bolshevism finds it necessary to weaken and gain control of the South otherwise than by converting its people to Communistic doctrines. It has a weapon already at hand, fashioned for it by the capitalist industrialists —the race question. A land of thirty million whites and nearly ten million blacks can be rendered helpless, can be thrown into chaos, so they reason, if the black and white races are set against one another in deadly conflict; they might even destroy one another, and thus leave the South, as Thad Stevens had advocated during reconstruction, to be peopled with new men.

When one examines their Southern Program, published at Headquarters in New York City (under the title *The Communist Position on the Negro Question*), it becomes evident that inflammatory literature is being circulated among the Southern blacks. This literature does not advocate any form of socialism; the Communist leaders admit that they have sounded out the Southern Negro on that question and found him strongly attached to property. He is land-hungry. So the literature promises him land. It urges the Negro to rise and seize the lands of his oppressors and divide them out. It promises to confiscate and give him these lands should the Communist Party succeed in gaining control of the Federal Government. It even promises to create a Negro State out of the Southern black belt and grant the Negro autonomy or allow him to secede from the Union. That is, it offers to help the Negro set up a black peasant state formed out of the confiscated or expropriated lands of the white man who is to be either exterminated or completely subordinated to the black race. The Communist Party instructs its agents in the South as follows:

> The white revolutionary workers, who understand the powerful revolutionary potentialities inherent in the Negro masses would answer in the following manner: "This land on which you and your ancestors have slaved for centuries rightfully belongs to you. The bosses' government in this territory is a government of foreign slave drivers; it is our enemy as well as yours. We recognize and support your right to organize your own government, to elect your officials, to organize your own militia, and your unqualified right to separate from the United States. Moreover, we, the white revolutionary workers, will prove our sincerity right now, at the present time, by . . . helping to organize a struggle to bring about those conditions in which you will be able to exercise your right to self-determination." (*The Communist Position on the Negro Question*, pp. 39-40)

Or again:

> In the South, the fight must be fearlessly developed against the thievery and robbery of the Southern Capitalists and landlords; against their whole system of enslaving the Negroes based on Jim Crowism and lynch terror, etc.
>
> In the first place, our demand is that the land of the Southern white, for years tilled by the Negro tenant farmers, be confiscated and turned over to the Negroes. This is the only way to insure economic and social equality. . . .
>
> Secondly, we propose to break up the present artificial state boundaries . . . and to establish the state

> unity of the territory known as the Black Belt. . . .
>
> Thirdly, in this territory, we demand that the Negroes be given the complete right of self-determination; the right to set up their own government in this territory and the right to separate, if they wish, from the United States. (*Ibid.*, p. 28)

In order that the Negro may be properly aroused to undertake such a task, no chance of stirring his passions against the Southern white is to be overlooked. The Communists in this handbook on their Southern Program admit their authorship of the trouble leading to the Dadeville trial. These Negroes were tenants who had, like all other tenants in the South, mortgaged their crop in advance for supplies for themselves and stock. When time came to pay up, they barricaded themselves in a house and without warning shot down four deputy sheriffs who had come to serve writs of attachment. Incendiary literature issued from Communist headquarters was found in the house, thus identifying—if identification were necessary—this race conflict with the Communist program. At present the trial has been appealed so that it is on the way to the United States Supreme Court. Irwin Schwab, the lawyer for the defense, employed admittedly by the Communist Party, is appealing the case on the basis that the Negro is not represented on the jury as he has a right to be under the Fourteenth Amendment. In the Birmingham case, the Negro who killed two white girls and shot a third first made his victims a speech which was identified as coming from incendiary literature of the Communist Party.

As for the Scottsboro case, it bears the earmarks of the Communist Party from the beginning to the present. These young Negroes, while it is said they are not Communists themselves, had been embittered and inflamed against the Southern whites before the alleged attack upon the two white women. Certainly since the beginning of the case the Communists have made every possible use of it to incite these and other Negroes to do violence against the whites. They say in their Southern Program that the Scottsboro case is their most strategic point in the world at the present time. They call attention to the wide-spread support given them in the the North by people who are not Communists—in fact, who are thoroughly unaware that they are helping a Communist program. At the present time the "Scottsboro boys", as the Communists love to call them, are holding levee in the Birmingham jail. Hundreds of Negroes, not Communists, of course, but Negroes who have been aroused by the incendiary literature meant to set the blacks to fighting the whites, visit the jail. The "Scottsboro boys" riot at will: refuse to go to their cells, arm themselves with pieces of plumbing and window fixtures, while the jailer and sheriff, lest they be accused in the Northern press of cruelty and mistreatment, stand impotent.

The Negro is incited to attack the white man, is promised his property, is promised an independent state where he will either rule or destroy the white man—is promised in effect the same things which the industrialists offered him as the price of his support during reconstruction.

Once again, the unfortunate black is being used as a pawn. If he were able to destroy or subordinate the white man with outside aid, as during reconstruction, he would not be given the white man's land; or if he expropriated it during the contemplated race struggle, he would not be permitted to keep it. One only has to remember the strategy of the Communist Revolution in Russia with reference to the landless peasantry to predict the fate of the proposed Negro peasant and his newly acquired lands. It will be recalled that the Russian peasant was promised in 1916 the lands of the nobility if he would quit the battle front. He did so, made his way back to his village armed with his rifle, helped mob the landlords, seized their property, and when the smoke had cleared up lo! the land was not his, but belonged to the State. He found himself no longer a free peasant, for the State took his wheat, barley, wool, flax, nearly everything he made, and left him hardly enough, and frequently not enough, to live on. He had become a State slave and has so remained in Russia until this day. This, of course, must necessarily be the fate of any agrarian population, black or white, which comes under the control of a Communist State; that is to say, it will be even worse than the fate of the agricultural populations under the capitalistic industrialist régime, where the farmers are slaves to insurance companies, banks, and merchants.

No, it is impossible to believe in the sincerity of the promises of "justice", land, and self-determination which the Communist Party holds out to the black man of the South. Nor can one believe that the Communists want "justice" for the "Scottsboro boys" or the Negro men on trial at Dadeville or the Negro murderer in Judge Lowell's court. They would prefer that the "Scottsboro boys" be executed by the State of Alabama and that all the other cases be decided against the Negroes in the end. What they want is a lengthy period of violent agitation against the South, a chance for such speeches as those which Lawyer Leibowitz delivered at the trial in Decatur or in New York, in which he characterized the people of Alabama as "lantern jawed morons and lynchers", swayed by bigotry and race hatred, "creatures" with "sordidness and venom in their hideous countenances", or for articles by such facile pens as that of Mrs. Mary Heaton Vorse in the *New Republic*. After they have rung the changes on the trials, it then would be a fitting end to have the Negroes executed. This would create another group of martyrs, another period of violent propaganda, in which the Southern people, their courts, their governments, would be held up to ridicule and Northern opinion further prepared for a Southern program; while more fuel would be added to the race antagonisms in the South.

I believe that Communism will fail in its ultimate goal of converting America into a Bolshevik state. Modified and practical State Socialism will be experimented with during the near future and it will probably meet the emergency. If Bolshevism should be successful in winning the Negro in the South to its Southern Program, and then fail to gain control of the Federal Government, it would leave the Negro in a worse plight than he was after reconstruction. He would find himself face to face with an embittered white race, outnumbering his race three to one, with whom he would have to make his peace; and the terms would probably be more severe than before.

But in the meanwhile, before the issue is settled, Communist agitation—and such conduct as Judge Lowell's—is creating a dangerous situation in the South. The criminal Negro, seeing those who have been accused of murder or rape such as the "Scottsboro boys" or the defendants on trial at Dadeville assiduously championed by an outside group, seeing them granted immunity in Judge Lowell's court or, perhaps, even in the Supreme Court, is bound to feel that he himself is above the reach of the law in a Southern State. It is hardly to be supposed that the Southern whites will tolerate such a situation. One has only to read the history of the abolition crusade or more particularly the history of reconstruction to be able to predict what will follow such flagrant interference either by the capitalist industrialists or by Communists. An extra-legal government would quickly spring into existence and such cases as that of the "Scottsboro boys" would be tried in courts whose decrees could not be appealed to a Federal tribunal. In other words, the outside interference with the relationship of the whites and blacks in the South can result in nothing but organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and in violent retaliation against the Negroes—themselves often innocent. Such interference makes justice difficult, not only by creating friction between the races, but by arousing anger against those who interfere: Lawyer Leibowitz and those who sent him were more on trial at Decatur than the Negro boys. The boys might have been cleared by a native lawyer on the second trial.

The Tyranny of Tokens

VINCENT MCNABB

THERE is nothing except Things and Tokens (of things).

A Thing is a nature; a token is a thing which has received a non-natural meaning or value from another thing that has an intelligent will. Thus the letter "A" is a thing to which human wills have fastened a certain vocal sound; the word "horse" is a token of an animal; a library card-index is a number of tokens of a number of books; a dollar is a token of ——? (something which for the moment eludes detection).

Men have made tokens in order to save time. (N.B. The desire to "save time", like the desire to save money, may be the root of all evil. Hence every time-saving contrivance should be closely scanned and searched for social contraband. "Timeo Danaos.")

Tokens save time; at least, the present time. (N.B. As the present is not the past nor the future, a saving of the present may mean a squandering of the past or of the future. The United States saved time by using up-to-date saw-machinery to turn its forests into lumber. But the United States is now sober enough to see that this saving of United States time was a squandering of United States capital.)

Tokens, because they are a time-saving contrivance of a human will, are useful to human beings in a hurry. But beings whose time is given them in order to fashion eternity should rarely be in a hurry. The Hurry-State is the Servile State. (N.B. Declarations of the natural right of man to Freedom are so much printed matter against the servile momentum of the Hurry-State.)

A state of token-seeking hurry delivers the hurried to thraldom. (N.B. This can easily be verified on all the scientific and social fronts. Consider Encyclopædias and Bibliographies—and, for the matter of that, Free Libraries with up-to-date Indices. Such contrivances deliver all but intellectual heroes to the tyranny of the second-rate.)

Some men who know little about things can become experts about tokens. Such men by their expert ignorance of things and knowledge of tokens, can impose their tokens, and therefore their will,* on such other men as have expert knowledge of things but not of tokens. (N.B. Hence the success of the cardsharper and the national or international financier.)

It may here be stated once for all that, granted the initial mistake of seeking tokens for things, the further steps into the tyranny of the token-expert are inevitable.

Even the man who has expert knowledge of the most necessary things—the Land-Worker—can become the employee of the man who has expert knowledge of the least necessary things—the Financier. (N.B. The Land-Worker who seeks money, *i.e.* a token, for his land-work has turned his back on seeking things and life through things. Quite quickly he is under the thraldom of (1) Transport and (2) Market. A little later Transport and Market and the Land-Worker are under the thraldom of Finance. Sooner or later, but all too soon at the latest, Finance, Transport, Market, and Land-Worker are in the greatest economic bankruptcy (*in history*, say the politicians; *since the flood*, says the Pope.)

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* My readers will see how "token" always means "will". Substituting "will" for the word "token" or "money" or "currency" or "price" or "value" sheds light.

Such blindness comes of this token-tyranny that the men who have things think that the value of a thing is its relation to its token! (N.B. We must see in this a kind of collective and highly infectious mania. For example, A, a Californian fruit-grower who feels insulted if called a farmer says: "Apples don't pay." B, a professor of Moral Philosophy at a University, says sententiously: "The social statisticians are agreed that there is no living to be got out of wheat."–Yet nature, *i.e.*, God, has not made apples to pay but to eat! And if there is no living in wheat, there is less than none in a greenback or sterling.)

The town is the headquarters of the token-expert. The country-side should be the headquarters and the home-quarters of the thing-expert. But if the land-worker thinks he can live only on the town, *i.e.*, by selling to the town, he is delivered to the tyranny of the town. He is as urban and decadent as a department store or luxury apartments. Moreover, unlike the poor pitiable town-dweller, he is a fool in an atmosphere of wisdom.

The present writer sees two things as clearly as he now sees from his window a banquet of spring green. (1) An organization by tokens will finally mean an organization by rations. Mass-production now made possible by token-organization will mean mass-distribution, that is, token- or ration-distribution. (2) This means class-war. There must be an inevitable struggle between the Capitalist and the Communist—between, on the one hand, the *few* who wish to token-organize the world for the primary benefit of the few and, on the other hand, the few who wish to token-organize the world for the benefit of the many.

Some of us would give way to despair if the issue were between these two, because the victory would make us social slaves of the victors. But there are signs that such despair could arise only by ignoring the grounds of hope. Intellectually and economically there is a mid-point between these two extremes. Pragmatically there are movements, of which this Review is a token, which have as a practical program to prefer things to tokens—and amongst things to put first things first—to organize production not for the sake of production but for consumption—to endeavour to give society a stable basis by making, as far as possible, the area of consumption co-terminous with the area of production—and in the organizing of society to prefer things to tokens, persons to things, and families to individuals, under the conviction that the family or home is the psychological defence of liberty and the homestead is the economic defence of the home.

Napoleon and 20th-Century Disarmament

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

THE problem of twentieth-century disarmament is that of limiting Napoleonic war.

For a century the Emperor has hypnotized the world. Especially he made modern war. Everywhere he cast his spell upon soldiers, and ever since they have been content to build upon the foundations he laid. To a man the generals of 1914-18 had been trained in his school. Therefore to understand the difficulties of Geneva we must first grasp the leading ideas of Bonaparte and the reasons for their survival.

First of all Napoleon at his height always aimed at the total overthrow of the hostile country. To us this seems natural enough. Accepting the truth that wars are not waged for their own sake, that they are only the continuation of peace-time policy and therefore always seek a political object, we think it a commonplace—almost a truism—that the political object should be unlimited. In reality the total overthrow of a hostile country is in no way essential to war and was seldom the military object in the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, or the eighteenth century. We take it for granted only because of the Napoleonic hypnosis.

The means by which the Emperor was able to crush the great powers of Europe was the huge mass of his armies. Numbers had always been one of the important things in war, but the eighteenth-century armies had been small because eighteenth-century governments were accustomed to fight only for limited political objectives. They were little professional forces whose war footing was usually far below one percent of the population; in a crisis Louis XIV once raised his armed numbers to one and a half percent of his subjects, but that was an extraordinary effort. The troops were of high military quality; their numbers were sufficient for emergency police work; at most they were designed for the conquest of small distant colonies or of strips of territory along one's frontiers. At the same time the small numbers were a working guarantee against large-scale wars, since no invader could occupy an entire country; to enter a hostile capital was almost unheard of.

Bonaparte, however, inherited from the French Revolution the system of compulsory universal service. Fully mobilized, under conscription a country puts into the field not less than ten percent of its total inhabitants. This device, to which the Republic had been driven by the dissolution of the old French Regular Army, suited the democratic ideas; equality before the law implied equality of obligation. To destroy the specialization of the soldier, returning to the practice of simpler societies in which every man had been a warrior, fitted the desire for primitive simplicity, the stock in trade of the democratic philosophers. Primitivism, beginning in the cult of the shepherdess, logically reproduced the barbaric horde. Napoleon, the Soldier and inheritor of the Revolution (which he sought in everything to regularize and carry forward) continued the conscription.

It goes without saying that the Emperor's mind was anything but primitive. In his youth he had indeed been bitten by the fashionable folly of the Noble Savage; his favourite reading had been the barbaric chants of Ossian. But the disgusting sight of the filthy Egyptian fellahin, with flies crawling unmolested on their eyelids, had cured him. So in the matter of generalship the simple device of having a larger army than his enemy was by no means his only resource. When inferior in total numbers he would manoeuvre in the hope of making himself superior at least at the decisive point; in his first and last campaigns, when circumstances reduced his total numbers below those of his enemies, he often succeeded in so doing. But clearly it was easier to obtain local superiority through total superiority, so whenever he could–that is, in his middle period as master of an unexhausted France–he tried to outnumber the armies he was to meet.

Bonaparte's method shows that he appreciated the possibilities of the enormous conscript armies which the Revolution had placed in his hands. "In war", he said, "I see only one thing, the masses. I try to destroy them, sure that the lesser things will fall of themselves." The numbers of the eighteenth-century armies had been limited and their tactics had depended upon a high training and discipline which could not be quickly put into recruits but were matters of years. Consequently their commanders could not expend their trained men too quickly; that which can neither be improvised nor rapidly replaced must be used with discretion. An eighteenth-century campaign therefore resembled a modern French duel with rapiers, in which neither duellist will risk a headlong offensive for fear of laying himself open to a fatal counter-stroke. The desire to economize life explains the importance of fortresses and entrenched lines in the eighteenth-century wars. We may compare this with the caution of Jellicoe at Jutland; the impossibility of quickly replacing his battleships made him the only man on either side who could have lost the war in a single afternoon.

On the other hand Napoleon at the head of conscript France, fighting against the professional armies of the legitimate sovereigns, was like a gambler whose purse is so full that he can afford to plunge. To aim at the total overthrow of an enemy implies boldness from the start. Conscription gave huge numbers, and up to a certain point the Emperor was able to combine numbers with rapidity. Disregarding territorial objectives, he would hurl his mass upon the enemy's main army, perpetually attacking and always seeking a prompt decision by battle. In a suspiciously neat saying, revealing at once the schematic, over-logical mind of the Latin and the ascendency of mathematical formulae over eighteenth-century thought, he said concerning rapidity that the strength of an army could be measured like the impact of a moving body in physics, you had only to multiply its mass by its velocity. The maxim neglects quality as opposed to quantity; in rating so high the importance of mere quantity, the Emperor was a true child of the democratic era.

Because the nineteenth-century mind was in general sympathetic to Napoleon, his cult survived his fall. Such earth-shaking campaigns as his were impressive enough in themselves, but in addition his very weaknesses–megalomania, self-intoxication, and inability to check himself—were not mere personal defects. They were part of a vast intellectual and spiritual current which continued to flow. The most influential teachers of the democratic movement continued to proclaim such shortcomings to be the sum of virtue, exalting instinct over reason, "self-expression" over self-restraint, adventure over stability, personal whim over universal human experience. In this the romantic movement of yesterday and the naturalism of today are one. We smile at the absurd phrase "Napoleons of industry" applied to successful merchants of corsets and lingerie. Nevertheless the spirit of unlimited competition which was until yesterday the soul of the business world continued in its own debased fashion the unlimited lust for power of the Corsican. Defeated, he continued to haunt the imagination.

Military thought partook of the spirit of the time. Because the dominant romantic-naturalist movement loved speed, boldness, adventure, and excitement for their own sakes, therefore the nineteenth-century soldiers insufficiently analyzed the reasons for the Emperor's failure. The nineteenth-century time-spirit, combined with the intellectual insufficiency of that century's educated soldiers, is still the root-problem of peace and war. While the desire to make war for an unlimited political objective—that is, in the hope of completely crushing the hostile country—is a matter for peoples and governments not for soldiers, still our dearly bought experience shows us two pitfalls of which the latter, had they been wiser, might have given timely warning: exhaustion and fortification.

Napoleon's Empire had fallen through exhaustion; his methods had worn out both his soldiers and his country. In the first place the soldier became physically exhausted. We have seen that the eighteenth-century permanent fortresses and entrenched lines played a great part in eighteenth-century war because generals were then compelled to economize life; at the same time this war of positions (which we have learned to call trench warfare) limited the fatigue of the armies. In the war of positions the soldier does not have to march long distances at top speed; he is fairly well sheltered and such supplies as remain within the defended area reach him more or less regularly. Napoleon's rapid advances and retreats were exhausting in themselves; his soldiers almost always had to fight without shelter from the enemy, often they had to sleep without shelter from the weather and eat what scraps they could find in villages already plundered. The writer would not suggest that these hardships were morally very terrible; physical deprivation, once over, fades quickly from the memory. On the other hand, hardship carried beyond a certain point breaks down the physical resistance.

Besides being physically exhausting to his soldiers, the Emperor's kind of war was economically exhausting to his peoples. The support of a conscript horde strains a community. If you can advance into hostile territory, then the strain can be eased a little by having your men live off the enemy's country, but this has moral and therefore political disadvantages: it rouses ill feeling and thus stiffens resistance. Moreover the absence of your mass of conscripts from productive effort increases the tasks of those left at home. For a time, revolutionary enthusiasm upheld the Napoleonic armies and peoples; the dream of a unified

Europe, cleared of the dead lumber of outworn feudalism and reasonably governed, stirred men's blood. But as time went on and the strain of the vast campaigns continued, moral exhaustion began. The conscript who has seen class after class of his elders compelled to march away, marches himself with lessened enthusiasm. The strain of continued losses begins to tell on the home front. The spirit of the Gallic Crusade died hard, but with time the French came to see the Emperor's battles less as the birth-pangs of a new world and more as interminable useless butcheries. Napoleon's first great failure, in Russia, shook the foundations of his power; within three years the material side of his effort had collapsed and he was on his way to St. Helena.

The exhaustion of prolonged conscript war had borne only upon France. Except for Prussia, none of the Emperor's enemies had adopted compulsory universal service, and the Prussian conscripts had fought only three campaigns. Moreover the revolutionary convulsion of society had roused such excitement and such violent passions that the new Revolutionary-Napoleonic device, the nation in arms, was not seen in due relation to the existence of settled peoples.

Looking back today upon Napoleon's era, one wonders whether the Emperor—before he was blinded by his own greatness—realized the brittleness of the huge instrument he was handling. He calculated so well the endurance of troops in terms of the one-day battle, exhausting his enemy with part of his forces while holding back large reserves to throw in late in the day, that one asks oneself whether he ever considered the problem in terms of national effort over a number of years. Ferrero has recently suggested that one reason why he was always eager for immediate battle was because he appreciated the danger he ran. In his secret thoughts he may have worked out the logical sequence from social convulsion through intense excitement and violent effort, to sudden fatigue and complete collapse. If so, one reason for his hurricane offensives may have been the knowledge that his peculiar type of war demanded an immediate decision.

If, however, as Ferrero plausibly suggests, the Emperor did carry his study of exhaustion beyond the one-day battle into the analysis of a campaign and beyond that again into the field of prolonged national effort, he kept his thoughts to himself. Certainly none of his nineteenth-century followers understood the material with which they were dealing. All, intoxicated with quick decisions through rapid, violent, and persistent offensives directed against the enemy's main army, neglected fortification and exhaustion.

To the generation which followed 1815, exhaustion was as much a part of the air they breathed as the Revolutionary-Napoleonic excitement had been to their fathers. Thus the military problem which occupied the old age of Von Clausewitz was not the complete overthrow of France; Von Clausewitz well knew that no colossal effort was within the scope of his time. His study was how to prevent France, still greatly superior in resources to his own Prussia, from further increasing her superiority by annexing Belgium. Throughout Europe the generation which followed Napoleon was as heartily sick of great wars as our own time. Thus perhaps after 1815 the nineteenth-century soldiers did not stress the matter of exhaustion because they knew that while they lived great wars would remain morally impossible. They may well have said to each other that no government would ever risk a repetition of what they themselves had seen.

Besides neglecting the possibility of national exhaustion in war, the nineteenth-century soldiers underrated fortification. Because the prepared defensive had played little part in Napoleon's wars, most of his successors believed that it had been rendered obsolete by his masses, his sweeping offensives, and his great victories in the field. It is true that the masses changed the scale of everything in war, fortification included. A fortress capable of sheltering a garrison of a few thousand could not be neglected by a little eighteenth-century army; if the army advanced leaving the place in its rear, the garrison could operate on its communications; if on the other hand a detachment large enough to "mask" the place and contain the garrison was left before the fortress, then the remainder of the field army was seriously crippled for operations elsewhere. The huge armies of the Emperor's time could mask the little eighteenth-century fortresses "in their stride" and go on about their business. The trouble had not been with the principle of fortification but with the scale of the existing fortresses.

The object of fortification is to gain time. A defended area, if surrounded, must fall at last to mere blockade through exhaustion of its resources, but by providing shelters for your own men and obstacles against an enemy, you can compel him to great and prolonged effort. A besieged garrison, while it holds out, can count on forcing the besieger to use against it numbers greater than its own and the besieger may tire of the game or become so weakened by his efforts that he can be counter-attacked. Meanwhile fortification gives a smaller force the power to postpone a decision.

Now we have seen that a postponed decision was fatal to the success of Napoleon's methods; in the critical Russian campaign of 1812, postponement through retreat had turned the tide against him. Not one nineteenth-century soldier seems to have asked himself what would become of the Napoleonic masses if a decision could be postponed through fortification.

For some time the cult of Napoleonic doctrine remained harmless because the political circumstances of the middle nineteenth century forbade its practice; not until more than fifty years after Waterloo did any great European power aim to crush another. From 1815 until after 1870 France abandoned conscription and was content with a professional army. "No more conscription or heavy taxes"—needed to support the conscript masses—were the two most popular planks in the platform on which the Bourbons returned to power. Nevertheless a nucleus of the Napoleonic military system remained; Prussia continued conscript, adding universal training to the universal service of Revolutionary-Napoleonic France.

The Emperor's doctrine of war continued congenial to the prevailing romantic-naturalist mood, and as time went on the Prussian soldiers began to plan the complete overthrow of this or that great power by mass offensives directed against the hostile armies in

Napoleon's fashion. Their victory over France in 1870-71 carried the Napoleonic doctrine everywhere; it steadily became more absolute and more extreme—although in every war from 1861 to 1914 the increasing defensive strength of modern weapons made fortification more and more valuable and cast deeper doubts upon the Napoleonic cult of the offensive.

The new allies of the defensive were industry and physical science. The American Civil War was the first war in which the infantry of both sides were armed with rifles; it was Napoleonic in that both sides raised large armies, first by volunteering and then by conscription, and in that it was continued until the last armies of the South were on the edge of destruction; it was anything but Napoleonic in its almost universal habit of entrenchment. The new hail of rifle bullets sent both sides to earth like rabbits; out of every eight attempted assaults only one would succeed. By the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 the infantry rifle had become a breech-loader and practically every frontal attack failed. When the Russians fought the Turks in 1877-78 the lesson was the same; being weaker, the Turks entrenched and beat off superior numbers of Russians again and again. The Turkish entrenched camp at Plevna surrendered only after a blockade had cut off supplies and broken the health of its garrison. In the Boer War of 1899-1902 the rifle had become a magazine rifle and very thinly held fronts proved impossible to pierce; a decision was reached only by wearing down the Boers. When a few years later the machine-gun had been added to the magazine rifle, the Japanese and Russians in Manchuria were equally compelled to entrench in order to live in the presence of the enemy. Russia gave up the game because of the danger of revolution at home. In the Balkan war the earthwork lines of Chatalja resisted every Bulgarian effort to break them.

Today it seems astonishing that these repeated warnings had so little effect. Of Americans, Russians, Turks, and British the Prussians could truly say that not one had a command and staff trained with Prussian thoroughness. Although 1870-71 had discounted frontal attacks, nevertheless their conscripts had beaten the regulars of Napoleon III in a few weeks, thanks to superior artillery and to the offensive spirit used in enveloping the flanks of the defense. Their pupils the Japanese, if not successful in destroying the Russian armies, had undeniably defeated them. The Prussian soldiers not only clung to their Napoleonic cult of the offensive at any cost, they actually pushed it further than the Emperor's generation had done. Even in the smooth-bore musket days, the Napoleonic high priest Von Clausewitz had at least insisted that the defensive, although not so fruitful in results as successful attack, was after all the stronger form of war. But Von der Goltz as late as 1883 could say in his *Nation in Arms*: "The idea of the greater strength of the defense is, in spite of all, a mere delusion. . . . To make war is to attack." Von Clausewitz continued to impress the new Prussian generation, however, through such sayings as "He who uses force unsparingly and regardless of bloodshed must gain his object, if his adversary does not do likewise". They failed to consider, as Liddell Hart has recently remarked, that limitation might be due to political wisdom based upon self-interest. Instead the neo-Napoleonic Prussians took for granted that the complete overthrow of a hostile country would necessarily leave the victor better off than before.

At the same time the Prussians were not altogether blind to the effect of the new weapons. Their doctrine of envelopment shows appreciation of the fact that adequately defended fronts could no longer be broken. After the Russo-Japanese war they raised their proportion of machine-guns and provided themselves with heavy field-guns and howitzers. Partly perhaps to distract attention from their intended sweep through Belgium by making the world believe that they intended to attack the French fortresses, they prepared trench mortars, hand and rifle grenades, searchlights, illuminating pistols, and periscopes. Thus, although their prevailing doctrine remained that of the offensive at any cost, they tempered it a little.

On the French side there was even less qualification. Like all continental Europe, the Third Republic established conscription soon after the Prussian victories of 1870-71, thus returning to the system inherited by Napoleon from the First Republic. With Foch at their head, the new generation of French military thinkers were convinced that 1870 had established Von Clausewitz's theory of "unlimited", *i.e.*, Napoleonic, war. The Prussians, they wrote, had beaten Louis Napoleon because–unlike his uncle–he had tried to use regulars to gain a limited political objective, whereas they had planned to crush him completely by a conscript "nation in arms" full of offensive spirit. As in Prussia, the ruling doctrine went from bad to worse. Although Foch did not appreciate the inviolability of a front adequately defended by modern weapons, and although he may have exaggerated the importance of morale as opposed to material factors, still as head of the French War College he did not abandon caution but insisted on holding out large reserves to be thrown in late in the game. In his preface to the third edition of his *Principles of War* he noted that in South Africa and Manchuria entrenchment had forced upon the attacker the job of breaking into a fortified position, so that the battle differed greatly from a Napoleonic combat in the open; but he did not allow this important fact to change the main current of his thought. Worse still, Foch's successors, Maillard and Grandmaison, who formed the French War Plan of 1914, were possessed by a veritable mania for the offensive. Will power and aggressiveness, they said, could accomplish anything.

Meanwhile a few doubting voices had been raised in the wilderness of military thought. One of these was that of a certain Bloch, not a professional soldier but a Jewish banker living at Warsaw, then the capital of Russian Poland. In 1897 in *The War of the Future*—the English translation was called *Is War Impossible?*—he predicted that modern weapons would do such execution as to prevent decisive attacks in the Napoleonic fashion. Universal entrenchment, he went on, would then turn the war into a gigantic siege in which the decision would be made not by arms but by famine, "the bankruptcy of nations and the break-up of the whole social organization". The General Staff easily dismissed these theories of a civilian pacifist. After the Russo-Japanese War a few soldiers did suggest the possibility of general siege warfare; in the *Royal Engineers' Journal* for January, 1907, the curious will find an article, "The Campaign of the Future", by Captain (now Lieutenant-Colonel) C. E. P. Sankey, supporting Bloch's thesis. But in general the worshippers of Napoleon remained unshaken. Those who lifted their eyes from the technical to the social aspect of war, taking the wish for its fulfillment, assured the world that the conditions of finance and industry would make future wars short. Everyone accepted the Napoleonic idea of the knockout, the total defeat of the hostile country. Every continental European power was conscript. Everyone proposed to achieve a prompt decision by a Napoleonic offensive at any cost. Each one of these offensives must be delivered by unarmoured men, with the same thin skin and fragile bones as their remote ancestors, the same limited speed and weight-carrying ability. Each would be met by such an arsenal of weapons as had never been used on earth; magazine rifles by the million, machine-guns by tens of thousands, these last playing to and fro streams of bullets like water from a hose.

The first shots were fired on the Western Front early in August 1914, and in six weeks Napoleon had been knocked off his pedestal of a hundred years and Bloch reigned in his stead. The French were the first to come to grief. Blinded by the destruction of their Intelligence Department after the Dreyfus case, they tested their mysticism of the offensive in headlong attacks against the German front in Lorraine—only to see their assaulting troops melt like wax in a fire. The German machine-gun defense was like a sausage machine; the more meat you fed into it the more sausages it turned out. Next the German offensive failed in its turn; their plan to turn the French western flank by coming through Belgium broke down. Instead of being enveloped the French were able to counter-attack successfully on the Marne and the Germans retired to the Aisne. On both sides the attempt at a Napoleonic opening had failed.

Meanwhile the first stage of Napoleonic exhaustion, the physical exhaustion of the soldier, had appeared. Week after week both sides had pushed forced marching to the limits of human endurance so that the battle of the Marne was fought between armies half dead from fatigue. On September 4th, just a month after the crossing of the Belgian border, the German Commander-in-chief told the German Foreign Minister, "We have hardly a horse in the army that can go faster than a walk". On the Allied side the British army, in the path of the enveloping German right and on the outer edge of the great wheel which pivoted around Verdun, had been particularly hard pushed. In their retreat they had marched and fought constantly for thirteen days, with an average of four hours sleep a night for infantry and three hours for mounted men. One of their officers said, "I would never have believed that men could be so tired and hungry and yet live".

About mid-September the stage of entrenched immobility was reached. Presently it extended from Switzerland to the North Sea. For all their love of entrenchment and permanent fortification, the generals of the eighteenth century had never witnessed such stagnation of an entire campaign. There were no more flanks to be turned and for four years the machine-guns riddled every frontal attack. Even when in 1918 the Germans three times broke the Allied front, the all-powerful defensive promptly re-established itself further back. The conscript mass had lost its power to attack. Thanks to the intellectual bankruptcy of generalship, the bankruptcy of every national treasury was approaching.

Two new weapons, however, the plane and the tank, had escaped the curse of immobility. The plane, able to carry small numbers of men and small quantities of high explosives rapidly from place to place, showed a certain—very limited—power of annoying hostile cities. Toward the end of the War it also proved capable of doing something against ground troops. The tank, combining fire power with armour and the ability to move over difficult ground, proved effective against the hitherto impregnable combination of machine-guns and barbed wire. On the other hand, neither plane nor tank is or can ever be a horde weapon. Cost alone would keep any nation from completely equipping its conscript masses as airmen or tankmen, just as it kept mediaeval states from fitting out every freeman liable to service with a war horse and a full suit of armour. Thus plane and tank are necessarily the weapons of an armed *élite* like the mediaeval knights or the small eighteenth-century professional armies.

The war against Germany added a third new weapon previously ruled out by international law, poison gas. Once used and known by both sides, however, this weapon proved to be only a useful auxiliary to the other arms and never by itself achieved decisive results.

Such then is the background of disarmament today. The Napoleonic formula remains. Everyone thinks of war in terms of the total defeat of the hostile country, the conscript mass, and the quick decision which will paralyze the enemy and shorten the war. An official Italian report recently quoted in the New York *Times* said, "Victory in future wars will go to the country best organized and able to carry an offensive rapidly to the heart of the enemy country". But although the formula remains, its unity has been destroyed because one conscript mass is no longer capable of a decisive attack against another. Short wars, if they are to be achieved at all, must be attempted by other than conscript means. Thus the ghost of the Emperor still walks although divided, like the ghosts which carry their heads in their hands in the old stories. We seek, as yet in vain, to give rest to that uneasy spirit.

The Brownings in Paris

Wilfred Rooke Ley

On a Spring morning in 1852 the Tuileries Gardens witnessed a meeting which, the more we think about it, held a certain comedy. It was a meeting—a chance meeting, let us at once admit—between an English gentleman, clad in the uniform of British respectability, and a French lady whose dress caused that gentleman some little hesitation. Nevertheless he offered the lady his arm, and with her promenaded the length of the gardens. The gentleman was Robert Browning and the lady was George Sand. What exactly troubled him about her dress it was difficult to define. He noted it covertly; it would be necessary to give Elizabeth some account of it at luncheon. It lacked—what? Discretion, taste. It was inappropriate to the lady's age and the dignity of a capital. Mr. Browning was unmoved by the legend of French impeccability in these matters. He searched his imagination, as a poet will, for words that should describe it. The words he found—and he gave them to Elizabeth to put in a letter—were: "terrestrial lavenders and super-celestial blues". What he meant was that the woman was over-dressed.

Elizabeth had been far more adventurous than Robert during that visit to Paris. She was, we know, "all a wonder and a wild desire"; and Paris was so full of interesting people. Yet even her adventurousness could not overcome entirely Robert's British reserve, and the pair of them were as timid as two children. There was Béranger living quite near them, and they could see him "wandering along the asphalte in his white hat": yet they never summoned up courage to present themselves. And Mazzini's letter of introduction to George Sand lay idle for weeks before they could make up their minds to use it. Elizabeth was dying to meet her. It is possible that Robert was not so eager.

They drove there in a closed carriage, Elizabeth rolled up head and all in a thick shawl. It was one of her bad days, and she went, as she says, "rather at the risk of her life". George Sand received them in a bedroom. Two or three young men were with her. How uncomfortable for Robert! Elizabeth, impetuous as ever, seized the outstretched hand and tried to kiss it. George Sand, charmingly one thinks, withdrew her hand instantly and kissed Elizabeth on the cheek. Elizabeth took stock of everything: the dark glowing eyes, the beautiful hands; the rapid low unemphatic voice; the repose, that marvellous repose beneath which you felt the intense burning soul. Elizabeth noted that she was dressed in "a sort of woollen grey gown fastened up to the throat, with a small linen collarette, and plain white muslin sleeves buttoned round the wrist". Simplicity and refinement! How our grandfathers worshipped these things; and how overcome they were when they surprised them in the foreigner! Yet for all her relief Elizabeth's eyes roved the somewhat informal *appartement* furtively, greedily, naughtily. There was one thing she had an especially "wild desire" to behold—and lo! there was not a trace of it. There was not, she says, a cigarette to be seen!

Had she heard of those black cigars? Even these, I think, she would have stomached. "Ah! but I didn't see her smoke. I was unfortunate"; and in the same letter —imagine these words set down upon paper in the year 1852—"the cigarette is really a feminine weapon if properly understood". Truly was Mrs. Browning the morning-star of the nineties!

So Elizabeth went to call upon Madame Sand once or twice again, in spite of "the sort of society rampant around her"; and it was really very good of Robert to let her go at all. "He didn't like it extremely," she says, "but being the prince of husbands he was lenient to my desire." Browning's revulsion from bohemianism was profound. He was as virile as Cobbett, and as hearty. He was orthodox in dress; something of a dandy indeed, rigidly conventional in manners as in morality. He could hardly have felt at ease among the friends of George Sand—"the crowds of ill-bred men who adore her, *à genoux bas*, betwixt a puff of smoke and an ejection of saliva, society of the ragged red, diluted with the low theatrical". Mrs. Browning, evidently, shared her husband's views as well as his violence.

Their attitude towards Madame Sand herself grew into one of extraordinary pity. "I was deeply interested in that poor woman. I felt a profound compassion for her. I did not mind much even the Greek, in Greek costume, who *tutoyéd* her, and kissed her I believe, so Robert said—or the other vulgar man of the theatre, who went down on his knees and called her '*sublime*' . . . a noble woman under the mud, be certain. *I* would kneel down to her too, if she would leave it all, throw it off, and be herself as God made her."

If this was a party at George Sand's in Paris, what would they have thought of those house-parties at Nohant, when Liszt and Marie d'Agoult and Chopin were among her guests? George Sand was far too intelligent to misunderstand Browning's studied, too studied courtesy. It hinted clearly enough all that is meant by that unpleasant word "mud". She never really thawed to the Brownings; they sensed a want of cordiality, and, be it said, regretted it. They felt they had done their best.

The limpidity of their own romance would have been insipid perhaps to a French romantic; certainly the strands, those charming humorous strands of which its beauty is woven. Would they, I wonder, have understood the Browning who, rather than inquire for "Miss Barrett", declined to visit his wife at all in the brief interval before the flight to Italy? And Elizabeth, headstrong impetuous Elizabeth, who objected to the word "elopement". Was she not married? Was it not therefore a Flight? These, I suspect, as well as Robert's yellow gloves, Elizabeth's preoccupation with fashion plates, even in the sinister sick-room of Wimpole Street, would have mystified if not repelled.

So then, upon a spring morning of 1852, Robert Browning and George Sand met by chance in the Tuileries Gardens, Robert impeccable, self-conscious, taking the air; Madame Sand natural, unthinking, enjoying the daffodils. It was the first time they had met away from Elizabeth, away from her torrent of words that filled so many embarrassing silences. One pictures—after a second's glance to right or left for a path of escape—the lifted hat, the proffered arm; and then the stilted courtesies, the commonplaces. He suits the pace to hers, as a gentleman should; as a gentleman should not, he controls the conversation. Madame Sand is amused; irritated, perhaps; but she accepts it. A quarter of an hour–half an hour was it?–wasted; and what should have been a marriage of true minds became an obstacle race of impediments. The historical parallel is the drive of Queen Victoria with the Empress Eugénie, which curiously enough happened in the same year.

At the Arc du Carrousel they went their ways. Is it our imagination, or do we catch a faint sigh of relief from Robert Browning; is there upon the features of Madame Sand a scintilla of scorn? The "society of the ragged red" was waiting: coffee and a black cigar; and in the apartments in the Champs Elysées Elizabeth too was waiting, with the remains of a luncheon growing rapidly cold.

Oscar W. Firkins

J. Bryan Allin

Oscar W. Firkins, critic, poet, playwright, and college professor, was a man who combined with distinction unusual abilities and diversified talents. He added to those qualities something very rare, a rich personality. Indeed in this latter quality he somewhat resembled Dr. Johnson. The things that the great Doctor said were usually wise but the way in which he said them was invariably unusual. Because he was normal at the core his idiosyncrasies delight us; we may not do the same things as he but we are heartily glad that he did them. Students who recall little else of Dr. Johnson can tell you what he would have done had he been a cassowary. Students who knew Professor Firkins can tell innumerable stories about his peculiarities, his deeds of kindness, or his well-rounded witticisms. He seldom roared anyone down, though I can recall once, when in the ebullience of youthful pedantry I discovered some dramatist ending sentences with prepositions and mentioned the fact, I was summarily dealt with. Usually he was gentle, self-effacing, almost bashful, hardly the physical counterpart of Johnson. His wit penetrated, it did not sting; you could not help knowing that the spirit behind it was deeply generous but unswervingly honest.

His life was of a piece and the recorded facts are not numerous. Oscar W. Firkins was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 3, 1864. He was graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1884. Seven years later, after operating a lumber-yard for a year and teaching at the Moorhead State Teachers' College, he became an assistant in the Rhetoric Department at the University of Minnesota. He received his Master's degree from that University in 1898. In 1912, before he had published a book, he was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters solely on the merit of scattered criticism. Under the editorship of Mr. Paul Elmer More he reviewed poetry for the *Nation* during the years 1915 to 1918. In 1918 he became the head and sole member of the Department of Comparative Literature at Minnesota. In 1919 he went to New York to write dramatic criticism for the *Weekly Review.* He occupied that post until the death of the magazine in 1920. He published five books of which I shall speak later. Other criticisms, poems, plays, and articles appeared in magazines in this country and in England. He died at the age of sixty-eight, March 7, 1932. It is characteristic of his devotion to duty that he attempted to teach during his last illness, collapsed, and had to be carried home.

These are meagre details, hardly indicative of the fullness of his life. There is, however, a pleasant and revealing bit of autobiography in an essay he wrote for the *Yale Review*, an essay in which he regrets that nineteenth-century America found no eye and hand to describe itself. "Art slept beside its canvas while originality on tiptoe peered in at the door." In speaking of this originality he tells us something of his mother and father.

> In my childhood my mother, a strong and capable woman, cooked, washed, and ironed for a large family. An education that stopped short at the country school

had bred (or spared) in her a taste for sterling poetry, and she worked to the measure of verses which she recited to herself above the kneading-bowl or dish-pan. I remember an Italian grammar which she read to her weak-sighted son in the intermissions of cookery which harvested praise from the most plodding and least lettered of her guests. I ask myself if English cooks and washerwomen did that. Verse has been said (or sung) by workers everywhere, by London housemaids and by Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper". There is little proof, however, that they chanted or recited literature. My father, a self-taught man, unversed in letters, who brought home copies of Mary J. Holmes's novels, to my mother's unconcealed and forcible disgust, had nevertheless a far-off sense and care for what was true and good in letters. He brought home to his wife and little son one day a second-hand copy of Byron—taken, I half think, in part payment for a bad debt —Byron in one volume in fine print with priceless footnotes in a print still more evasively minute. I ask myself if one of Trollope's bagmen—the bagman in *Orley Farm*, for example—would have bought Byron for his wife and son.

But those of us who knew Professor Firkins as our teacher, who think of him as a man of years, never as a boy, recall him most vividly through the things that he said to us or through the countless anecdotes we have heard of him. Perhaps those anecdotes reveal his character more quickly than any other description. Everyone knows, of course, that he never rode in an automobile, that he refused to have a telephone in his home, that he usually carried an umbrella. During the greater part of his life he lived quietly, almost secluded. He never married. Nature, which blessed him with abundant insight and a keen inner eye, withheld the blessing of good physical vision. He was very short-sighted. That, added to a constitution which never was robust, may have been the reason why he was averse to meeting strangers. I know at least one distinguished critic and professor, whose work Professor Firkins admired, who tried unsuccessfully to meet him at Minnesota. And yet once when he was ill for a short time and his class sent him some flowers, he wrote a copy of an original sonnet, in longhand, for each member of the class. No one was more generous or helpful than he, but he was likewise scrupulously truthful. His letters of recommendation whether favourable or not were always pointed; sometimes they were almost rapiers. He wrote of one young lady who was applying for a scholarship: "She has a fondness for pale inks and one might say that nature had etched her character with the same ingredients." It was not only his students whom he prodded; he wrote occasional letters to his pastor. One such letter was provoked by the pastor's use of the Goodspeed Bible in the liturgy. Mr. Firkins praised the sermon and then added: "But wouldn't you agree that the Goodspeed Bible is something like a Titian touched up by a sign-painter?"

And there was another element—the elements were mixed in him—an element which we may describe in his words as "frolic" or "impish". The virtues "rioted" in him as he said they did in Jane Austen. It was the custom at Minnesota to excuse seniors from final examinations if their grades were satisfactory. Professor Firkins's classes were made up largely of seniors and it so happened that in one class there were only four students left. When the time came for the examination he went to his classroom. In his usual quiet way he said something like this: "The University stipulates that an examination must be given in every course. It stipulates the time and place; it does not stipulate the subject-matter or even the subject of the examination." He then swore the class to secrecy (so, at least, I heard the story) and said, "Please answer the following questions. How much is two and two? When did Columbus discover America? What is the first name of the Crown Prince of Sweden? [He was travelling in the country at the time.] That will be all, thank you." And I cannot forbear adding the one story which I think most truly representative. It is related that one time he learned that a young instructor was badly in need of money. Mr. Firkins went to him with a check for one hundred and fifty dollars. When he gave it to the young man he said simply, "I am a very old man, I have very little use for this". There were many reasons why his students loved him.

His method of teaching was his own. He used to lecture to us for about half of the hour and then dictate an outline, including all of the punctuation, summarizing his lecture. Those outlines contain the best of his judgements. I have often wished that he had had those outlines mimeographed, although I share a kindred horror for that particular kind of pedagogy. Notes grow less intelligible with the years, in spite of high resolves to have them typewritten, and those notes reveal the center of his critical philosophy. Since the same principles are applied in all of his works it may simplify matters to quote some statements drawn from his lectures. I quote from notes, not outlines, but the statements, if not all of the phraseology, are his.

"Common sense is two-thirds of criticism. Criticism should clear the mind of prejudices of time and place to give common sense a fair chance. After that a good mind will get at the truth. Most judgements are not covered by rules. The rules cover only the smallest part of the ground. One-tenth of knowledge seems to most men nine-tenths. Sensibility and common sense are the properties on which criticism must be based. When criticism is comprehensive and verbose it is a sign that criticism has ceased to be authentic. Criticism is judgement."

Those statements hardly constitute a philosophy of criticism, but it is perhaps true to say that they are the *sine qua non* of a philosophy. With those as a basis and with sound instincts as a guide, a man could not go far astray. That common sense is essential to a work of art as well as to criticism, is an idea that frequently occurs in Mr. Firkins's work. "A character is often better", he told us in class, "for being normal at the core and peculiar on the surface." In speaking of Shaw he said, "The Dickens world is at its basis rational and orderly; therefore when the reader comes upon a queer point in the Dickens world he says 'Why?' and laughs; when, in these later times at least, he comes upon a queer point in the Shaw world, he says 'Why not?' and doesn't laugh". Speaking of Hamlet he said, "I am not sporting with paradox when I say that the vice of insanity is that it rationalizes everything at a stroke". The last two quotations are from dramatic criticisms written for the *Weekly Review*. In those reviews he clearly demonstrated his ability to apply his principles. And it is a tribute to his taste that he was able to judge plays in New York as calmly and sensibly as he had judged them before. New York, especially in those years, was "rationalizing everything at a stroke".

"What impresses me in the plays of the hour and of the crowd", he wrote shortly after he went to New York, "is less the failure of the public taste to refine itself, than to define itself." The public, unable to give orders, can exercise only the power of veto and what is worse, it does not veto practices or qualities or elements, but simply plays. As a result it is a hard master whose requirements are but vaguely defined.

Apart from its primary demand for shudders, laughs, and kisses, the public requirements and exclusions are unfixed. With the reservation just made, there is hardly a virtue which the dramatist is forced to regard as indispensable; there is hardly an enormity which he is called upon to abjure as fatal. Art is the adjustment of conduct to conditions; it thrives on conditions. High conditions make high art; many conditions and sharp conditions make exact art. The reason why our commercial drama, having sacrificed everything to pleasure, succeeds so indifferently in the task of pleasing is that the demand which it has to meet is almost a demand for unconditional pleasure.

Throughout those pleasure-seeking if not pleasant years he kept his own untrammeled way. If the plays which he reviewed did not sparkle his reviews did, and his taste was, in Sainte-Beuve's words, "un choix net et parfait". He did not review all of the plays he saw: he paid to dull or meaningless plays the tribute of silence. As a result his criticisms are remarkably fresh today. Perhaps some excerpts from his criticisms of O'Neill will indicate their temper. When O'Neill's first seven plays were published under the title of *The Moon of the Caribbees and Six Other Plays* he wrote, "Mr. O'Neill's work I should call literature—vigorous though repellent literature. I am less sure that its quality is dramatic". A little while later in discussing *Beyond the Horizon* he said: "In *Beyond the Horizon* . . . Mr. O'Neill has essayed a three-act play. The step from one to three in play-making is a long one, and Mr. O'Neill has slipped—even fallen—in the undertaking. It is not merely that he views the three acts as a sum in addition, though that error would be grave enough, but that he does not tax himself to make the items dramatic. He has failed to give us even a one-act play with excess baggage."

"Not as a drama but as a bit of letters in picture", he said, "*The Emperor Jones* is a high, imaginative, even profound, piece of work. . . ." But his qualification was important. "Mr. O'Neill does not recognize —in his practice at least—what I may express a little pedantically by saying that the ultimate in pathos is often best reached by the penultimate in affliction, and the ultimate in horror by the penultimate in atrocity. The imagination does not like to be outstripped by the facts; it finds pleasure in the facts which it can keep pace with or outspeed." Seven years later, writing for the *Yale Review*, he said of *Marco Polo*, "He [O'Neill] has a store of Asiatic material, episodes, tableaux, chants, meditations, feebly consolidated, but sedulously filed, not very dramatic, but copious, curious, various, never dull, sometimes subtle, occasionally moving. . . . Mr. O'Neill seeks no trivial game; he wants to vary and enlarge his hunting ground. Drama suffers in the new apprenticeship, but we admire his refusal to be tethered by success".

It is dangerous to tear sentences from considered criticisms in which the analysis is astute and to present particles as rounded judgements, especially when criticisms of some of the later plays are not in print. Yet the following paragraph written in criticism of *The Emperor Jones* seems to me to apply to most of O'Neill's plays:

> But the final word must be a word of homage. It is easy to carp; and it is not easy to write plays. I have not tried to obscure the fact that Mr. O'Neill's tastes in life and in language are not quite my tastes; I should prefer to study life in other forms and other phrases. But how many playwrights now among us study life in any forms or phrases? A man who refuses spinach at his lunch-table in New York might be very thankful to a hospitable native who offered spinach to his hunger on a foodless island. Eugene O'Neill has the sense of things, has honesty and fearlessness enough to regulate his drama by that sense, and a control of the theatre which is not purchased at the ignoble price of subjection to the theatre. He is young, fertile, and resourceful; he has time at his command, and time, let us hope, is his ally.

Those lines, written for a weekly periodical, seem to me to be just and discerning. And it is well to recall that justness and discernment were rare qualities in those days of the "Renaissance" when America was being revitalized and the voices of several more or less pleistocene turtles were heard in our land.

One of the outlines which Professor Firkins gave us was made up of suggestions for those of us who thought of taking up dramatic criticism. He told us to "try to say something about the great actor which is true of no other or of few others; in other words differentiate him". He sought in his own criticisms, whether of great or minor artists, not only to distinguish the varied qualities of the acting but also to reveal the essence of the character portrayed. As a result one may read with profit his reviews of actors whom one never saw, perhaps never heard of. He said of Mr. Lionel Barrymore as Mouzon in Brieux's *Red Robe*, "The original point in Mouzon is that he is both jovial and stony. . . . In the rendering of this combination Mr. Barrymore was happy; he even put shading into a character to which Brieux has not been liberal in shades". He said of Mr. Augustine Duncan who played John Ferguson: "He struck the right and sound note at the outset of the play, and the rest of his performance was mainly a reverberation of that note. The fact that John Ferguson is a self-reverberating character may absolve Mr. Duncan from blame, but absolution is not quite identical with triumph." And this final criticism, I think, reveals him at his best. He wrote: "I followed Miss Octavia Kenmore's Hedda with interest if also with tranquillity. Miss Kenmore is a woman whom the eye willingly follows, and even where her acting was bloodless I did not find it insipid. . . . There is iron in Hedda; there is no iron in Miss Kenmore. Hedda is truculent and insolent where Miss Kenmore is, or comes close to being, pouty and saucy."

I have lingered over Mr. Firkins's dramatic criticism because it has not been collected and is therefore little read and because I find in it some of his best work. I do not know that he preferred any one form of literature to another, but I suspect that drama was, perhaps, the favourite son in a large family. And yet immediately that is said, it must be qualified. Poetry was likewise a favourite child. He wrote both plays and poetry and he criticized both. His criticisms of poetry appeared regularly in the *Nation* for three years, and they reveal a man of delicate sensibility. A student once told me that Professor Bliss Perry used to refer to Mr. Firkins's book on Emerson as a book on a poet by a poet. I have not verified that statement, but whether it has the weight of so venerable an authority or not, it is true. It is not necessary to read Mr. Firkins's verse to discover it. He had, in a high degree, the ability to sum up a person or a thought in a figure or an epigram. As Sainte-Beuve said of Joubert, "Sa méthode est de toujours rendre une pensée dans une image; la pensée et l'image pour lui ne font qu'un et il ne croit tenir à l'une que quand il a trouvé l'autre." His summaries were usually illuminating and precise although once in a while I think he was, as Christopher Morley said, "carried a little past his destination by the sheer gusto and hilarity of his antitheses and paradoxes". Occasionally, only occasionally, one has to break the bone to get at the marrow. Usually his thoughts were rendered more vivid in images and that ability alone reveals his kinship with the poets.

The years in which he was criticizing poetry were the years of the "New Poetry"; they were difficult years for the critic. Artists seemed to see the world through translucent smoked lenses. At best their light was lambent, at worst it was "darkness visible". The prophets and the prophetesses of the greater day, lacking ideas, deluged us with words. They sought, they said, "simplicity and sincerity", and when they found their desiderata in Synge and Yeats, two of the major seeresses were able to say that "compared with these Irishmen the best of their predecessors seem literary". That was strong condemnation, no doubt, though commonplace enough in those days. And there were other differentiae. Modern poetry, they told us, "is intensive rather than diffuse", "it looks out more eagerly than in". In their quest for some predecessor who had looked out, diffusely, rather than in, intensely, they looked out at Whitman, "so great a master, so ancestral a revolutionist". And when they were able to quote a Frenchman, as Miss Monroe and Miss Henderson could in their second edition, they were no doubt triumphant. M. Jean Catel said: * "The United States are entering resolutely into the Assembly of the Muses with a marvelous offering of poetry." There was no disputing French taste; the French had already discovered the "ancestral revolutionist". So when *they* spoke of our marvelous offering an American critic had to walk warily. Mr. Firkins was one of the few critics who remained calm, and judged justly, and was unafraid.

On the centenary of Whitman's birth he wrote an essay on him for the *Weekly Review*. Since Whitman was so important to the "New Poets", one paragraph of that essay is pertinent here. He wrote:

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* I choose these remarks from Miss Monroe and Miss Henderson's *The New Poetry*, 1923 edition, because they seem to me to represent the lack of critical apperception common about fifteen years ago. These same remarks, with but few changes, are reprinted in the revised edition now offered to the public.

Whitman felt like a poet. But the mere deposition of feeling will not make poems. Poems are fabrics; the poet is a fashioner or maker. Verse is the outcome of the equipoise between restraints and spontaneities. It is a mistake to suppose that delicate and refined effects, like invalids, require care, whereas bold and rough effects, like athletes, may be left to the exercise of their pleasure. Football men, in fact, *are* watched like invalids in the period of training; and the bold and rough effects must be guarded by care and vigilance from the intrusion of alien and thwarting forces. Whitman could not sustain himself, maintain the pace, even in the ruggedness of insolence.

If the "New Poets" lost some of the ruggedness of their "great master", they lost little of his insolence. Miss Lowell told us later that "between the time of Whitman and Sandburg, a difference of fifty years, the world is no longer the same". The "New Poets" realized, even before she wrote that sentence, the uniqueness of those years and sought to meet unprecedented conditions with new ideas. Mr. Lewisohn found that the French Symbolists had a new view of metaphysics which would help the artist. Mr. Firkins was not impressed. He wrote in a review of Lewisohn's *The Poets of Modern France*, "Art's field is experience, external or internal, and to say that experience can be transformed by a fresh view of its metaphysical basis is to say that a man's vision of the sun and the planets can be changed by a shift of his allegiance from Ptolemy to Copernicus". Mr. Pound found new vigour in linguistic study, especially study of Provençal poets. Mr. Firkins found in his modernity something of the spirit of Martial, but he said:

"Mr. Pound draws his themes from all lands, and his phrases from all languages. The Pentecostal effect stops with the confusion of dialects; it scarcely reaches the tongues of fire." And after saying that Pound can fix on nothing; that he "rebels today against his revolt of yesterday", he added, "Mr. Pound is quite clear that he will obey nobody but himself; the trouble is that he waits vainly at his own threshold for the command. After all, there are consolations in having no errand; one can stare to one's heart's content in the shop-windows."

Miss Lowell was as sure as anyone that she had something to reveal to the world. Nearly everyone believed her. Mr. Firkins was less credulous. "I know of no writer", he said, "who basks in truisms more cosily than this champion of innovation. She addresses a grade of intelligence which is expected to be thankful for the announcement that 'natural bents are often too strong for paternal regulation', and that 'a smattering of many subjects is not education'. The metaphors are coeval with generalities. The author calls H. D.'s poems cameos or intaglios with a pen all but dripping from the expression of her abhorrence of *clichés*." When Mr. Masters, in company with his contemporaries, discovered the desirability of doing as one chooses, he remarked that Mr. Masters had been anticipated in this discovery by the savages and the pterodactyls. And this one paragraph of criticism of Masters might serve as a criticism of the whole period.

> He [Masters] says whatever comes into his head, and the reader who knows how numerous and various are the arrivals in that caravansary can imagine the artistic

confusion which results. The principle that undermines his ethics saps his art—the theory that one thing is as good as another. Why give one prompting called conscience supremacy over another called lust? Why give one idea called an artistic purpose precedence over another called irrelevancy? Art is the claim of one idea to suppress another; art is privilege, and privilege is iniquity. Art is mostly the conservation of effects: Mr. Masters is so unflinching a radical that he disdains to conserve anything—even his hold on his reader.

The criticisms I have quoted are all, I realize, adverse criticisms and the reader who knows Mr. Firkins's work may think the selection unjust. Mr. Firkins wrote many favourable criticisms, but his generosity was always discriminating; and the discrimination of a critic of the "New Poetry" can probably be more quickly recognized by his reservations than by his enthusiasms. Mr. Firkins thought of poetry as an "equipoise between restraints and spontaneities"; the norm of regular rhythm was to him the stone wall on which the ivy of irregularity could disport itself. The charm might lie in the capricious vine but it required the support of the stone wall. Again, great poetry was, for him, the re-creative, and minor poetry recreative. It was unfortunate that most of the poetry he criticized had to be deprived of the hyphen, that so much of it was only sprawling ivy.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was Mr. Firkins's first, and undoubtedly his greatest book. In reviewing it in the *Nation* Paul Elmer More said: "There is at least the value of novelty in a biography written in the pointed, epigrammatic style of Emerson himself, and the novelty is not lessened by the addition of a subtle literary sense combined with a pedantic, or perhaps better, a pedagogic meticulousness of method. . . . Yet if the manner is a little too scholastic, the matter is that of a man steeped in literature and sensitive to the lightest nuances of style." The pedagogical method consists in a sort of cataloguing of the qualities of Emerson's prose, poetry, and philosophy. The precise tabulation of elements may irk the reader but it sharpens the distinctions. The diction, which is likewise meticulous, sometimes becomes almost *précieux*; the search for the exact word leads to circumlocutions. Nowhere is Mr. Firkins's ability to clarify a thought by means of an epigram more clearly demonstrated, though an occasional metaphorical stile becomes a hurdle for the reader. But those slight defects are not what one remembers about the book; one remembers it rather as an admirable appreciation of Emerson's work considered as literature.

For Mr. Firkins the originality of Emerson lay in the fact that he "put (in practice as in theory) the whole weight and worth of the universe at its best behind each object and behind each moment of experience". He said of that premise that "whether it is real or illusory it represents the highest *yield* of life". Emerson deeply felt the fluidity of the universe. As a result he concentrated on the present moment; it became for him the type of the eternal. But he sought permanence also and he found it by conferring on every fact "the added force of a religious value". The perpetual flux was no longer a problem; he "triumphed in the instability of the universe". Religion, which is special, and life, which is universal, became for him coextensive. In that ability to find permanence in instability lay his strength and his present and future value.

> An ample and generous recognition of this transiency and slipperiness both in the nature of things and in man's soul seems more and more a necessary ingredient in any estimate of the universe which shall satisfy the intellect of the coming man. But it seems equally true that the coming man will never content himself with a universe a-tilt, a universe in cascade, so to speak; the craving for permanence in some form cannot be jauntily evaded. Is there any known mind which foreshadows the desired combination so clearly as Emerson's? . . . Few men, it is true, are now capable of so delicate a reconcilement of permanence with elasticity. But the world is still immature, and, the rarer the combination, the more precious the demonstration of its possibility.

In that passage Mr. More found evidence of an inadequate dualism, or rather a lack of recognition of "the feeling of evil as a tremendous reality". Mr. Firkins felt that lack no more than did Emerson. He was not a dualist. In discussing Emerson's influence on Unitarianism he said that it drew new fervour and new liberalism from Emerson. "Its misfortune lay in the fact that it lost the fervour while it kept the liberality. . . . Liberalism is a strain on the vital force of any cult—an ordeal which the Emersons, but not the Emersonians, can victoriously and profitably meet." Is that any more than a confession that Emerson's reconciliation of irreconcilable forces was possible only because there were elements in Emerson's character not present in his philosophy? Emersonianism fell, partly at least, because the religion behind it was moribund. Its adherents could not, as Emerson seemed to do, put evil to one side; and his philosophy almost ignored the problem. It would seem therefore that even if, as Mr. Firkins suggested, the world received a new and vital charge of the religious spirit and Emersonianism were revitalized, it would still need revision.

Mr. Firkins did not share that opinion. He had a deep respect for Emerson's religion. Emerson's religion, he said, "was a self-supporting enterprise, not a hoard, . . . it required a large initial outlay of capital", and he added, "The lesson to the penniless is clear". The lesson was not clear, I think, to the spiritually wealthy Mr. Firkins. He shared much of Emerson's optimism. He valued manliness; he found it in Emerson. He esteemed the things of the mind; he was hopeful, not rashly but deeply hopeful. The synthesis of permanence and elasticity which Emerson achieved he also could and did achieve. He recognized many defects that he did not hesitate to specify, but he saw, above all, the man. If, then, he erred on the side of optimism, he erred with the brave, with those who can face chaos unafraid. His book is a valuable testimony of the hope that he shared.

In two excellent essays Mr. Firkins has outlined his attitude toward realism, and perhaps a statement of that attitude, drawn from several sources, is pertinent before we come to his next two books. Realism began modestly enough. Certain parts of life appeared interesting to the artist and these he portrayed as he chose, mixing the *verum* with the *verisimile*. Jane Austen spoke the truth, because she found it interesting. "I think she portrayed the truth", Mr. Firkins wrote, "when she did portray truth because she liked it—

really liked it—without theory and without conscience, and I think this independence and unconcern in combination with real attachment is part of her strength." If fiction proved more sprightly than truth that was not her concern. There was no confusion in the mind of the reader; he tested her truth against his own experience. "The reader believed as little or as much as he could or as he chose." Novels were not supposed to be sources of truth, their testimony was incidental. But while religious authority was declining in influence and science was gaining and the demand for exact knowledge increasing, the attitude toward novels changed. "The pressure of science should logically have given birth to one of two results: the expulsion of error from the books or the eradication of belief from the reader. Fiction met neither of these demands, yet its power, particularly its power as teacher, steadily increased."

Having gained a reputation for veracity the realists decided to go the whole way, to push realistic theory to its logical conclusion, and to include in works, intended as works of art, the formlessness of life. Of that theory Mr. Firkins said, "Now the formlessness of life is a fact but it is an obvious, a monotonous, and an unpleasant fact; and I see no reason why the novel should encumber itself with the indefinite and mechanical repetition of a truth which has three good reasons for keeping out of sight". Realism is not science but art, and as art it not only observes, it interprets. If it were only science it could hardly justify a hopeless report on the worth of life and of man by the statement that the Thing is true; even truth must be appraised by its consequences. It is not science, it is art and as art it has a high task. Yet as the power of the realist has increased the quality of the witness has deteriorated. Once he was the offset to his own testimony. Now he is on the same side as his testimony. And though it would seem that "the sum of human faculty were what one would bring to the presentation of a case in which life and man are judges, plaintiffs, and defendants: the sum of human faculty seems less and less discoverable in the realistic witnesses of our time".

The present state of realism is summarized admirably in the concluding paragraph of the essay, *The Irresponsible Power of Realism*:

> Realistic fiction is art; as art, its place is high, valid, and secure. It may employ truth as much as it will, provided that it employs truth for art's sake. But the moment it employs truth for truth's sake it is on doubtful ground, for truth, in the broad sense, cannot be effectually served by any agency that looks to other ends than truth. Truth is hard to reach when truth is the sole object; what hope can there be in the results of a divided purpose? The combination of truth with untruth in a fabric whose end is unconcerned with truth is perfectly legitimate; the combination of the purpose of truth with any other purpose is unsound. The words beauty and goodness have no place in the vocabulary of science. The attempt to be true and moral or to be true and immoral, warps the truth. The things may coalesce, but the purposes cannot mingle. Realistic fiction, if we put aside its art, is pseudo-science, and its place in the twentieth century is a place cheek by jowl with alchemy and astrology. Nevertheless—so strange are the vagaries of a scientific age—it exercises as teacher a great and totally irresponsible power, and it uses that power to a large extent for the emasculation

of the race at an hour when the demands upon its manhood are superlative.

The desire to quote that last paragraph was overpowering though it carried us a good distance beyond Jane Austen, the subject of Mr. Firkins's second book. She was hardly a victim of the "vagaries of a scientific age". Her search for truth was unhampered by the scientific method. She did not even spell truth with a capital T. She was willing to forego truth or to scour it until it shone, if it suited her purpose. One stanza of a poem, a brilliant if, perhaps, too obviously made poem, which stands at the beginning of Mr. Firkins's book indicates Jane's attitude towards truth. It runs:

> Thou seekest truth, and when 'tis found
> Thou dost its sportive whims confound;
> The shafts, the stables, and the pound
>   Shall now its pranks restrain;
> It dreads thy logic's bristling fence,
> Thy files of serried evidence,
> Thy panoplied, embattled sense,
>   Irrefragable Jane!

Mr. Firkins had a good deal to say about truth in Jane Austen's work (and by this time the reader knows that by truth he means truth to fact), and the main thing he wishes to say is that her truth was a compromise. Professor Woodbridge found the paradox too much for him when he reviewed this book. He objected to the iteration and reiteration of the contrast between the diction in her novels and in her letters, between her life and her work. The thesis, in part, is this: "The truth is that the novelist is as intensely social as she is conscientious, and if the essence of conscience is inflexibility, the essence of society is compromise. The rational woman is provisionally rational and ultimately woman."

The compromises with society which Jane had to make were numerous and sometimes harmful. She lived in a century when everyone's written diction was grandiose. She followed the convention. "Miss Austen wrote majestically for the same reason that she wrote in English." She added a moral because it was customary. ". . . In those didactic times she would no more have sent a novel into the world unprovided with a lesson than destitute of a binding." But her object was not primarily to point a lesson, she wrote because she wanted to write. Her world was closely circumscribed. The people in it read a little, they were not illiterate, but they loved above all else materialities, their beef and pudding, their houses and lands. In that world there was also leisure, and leisure begot an "air-world" of society. The second world transformed the values of the first. It transmuted solid values, insubstantial in their substantiality, into airy values that were unsound. Jane accepted the airy world as she admitted other forms of artificiality. But she herself was of the earth and she saw through the shams; her humour was brightened by the fact that, seeing through them, she did not see beyond them. In other words, she saw no alternative. Jane, as the reader may see, was a vital human being to Mr. Firkins. The last sentence of the book is a fine characterization.

> She is not the sweet Jane Austen of complacent legend, but a Jane more to my taste, a plain, frank, keen-sighted Englishwoman, with an inspiring wilfulness that had its bound and check in a touching docility, with an incisive-

ness finally and securely, though not immediately or showily, subject to benevolence, and with a friendly acceptance of limited surroundings of which the literature she gave to a grateful country was at once the expression, the result, and the reward.

William Dean Howells, a Study, established Mr. Firkins as the accepted authority on Howells. He was subsequently asked to write the article on Howells for the *Dictionary of American Biography*. That article was one of the best things he did. The critics who criticized the book adversely (and there was more cavilling than criticism) took exception to the definition of realism implied in the study. Mr. Firkins's idea of realism must by now be tolerably clear to the reader. He did not mean by realism the slavish copying of details, especially the sordid details of a formless life. In the article mentioned above he defines explicitly what he means by Howells's realism. "He [Howells] stands for a realism that takes its key from the character and taste and cultivation in the realist, using these helps, not finally to pervert the result, but, initially, to further and enrich the process." His strength lay in that kind of realism; but because of his strong feeling that life and literature were copartners he was not always true to the best in him. "In his personal output he not only largely shared, he strongly advanced and signally illustrated, two leading biases of his time, the confinement of literature to experience and the conversion of experience into literature." As a result his novels followed him in his wanderings; they copied his migrations as precisely as if his imagination had been no more than a part of his luggage.

The theory that transcripts of nature are art was gaining currency. Howells's feeling for the co-partnership of life and literature drew him towards the theory; consequently he was drawn two ways in his novels and in his criticism. "He failed to choose definitely between prescription and anarchy." He failed to realize always that when an artist starts out to write a novel he must have a plan and that that plan must control what he has to say; that "the novelist cannot find in the *general* confusion of nature an endorsement for any *particular* confusions in his own work". Once he has undertaken an explanation of nature he cannot leave things unexplained simply because nature does. In his own practice Howells used chance and coincidence, the enemies of conscious art, explaining that they were parts of nature; insofar as he did that, he fell from his own best practice. "His reality or the effect of reality at which he aimed failed to satisfy; it convinces without quite persuading." Or as Mr. Firkins wrote in another place: "It is perhaps a slight defect in the otherwise unexceptionable attitude of our own excellent Mr. Howells that he affects us as having stood up in church with truth, and uttered the promise to hold, love and cherish with appropriate solemnity. After that it is all a matter of course. Who minds a man's attentions to his wife?" None the less, at his best Howells represents a high type of realism. Two sentences in Mr. Firkins's article in the *Dictionary of American Biography* present his final, admirable estimate of Howells.

True poet in late and scant moments, and everywhere and always a copious and winning talker, Howells will be mainly remembered as a realist, the purveyor and upholder of truth in fiction. . . . On two not unlikely assumptions, that realism, and that this form of realism, [the form of realism mentioned above] should prevail, his high distinction in the world of letters is secure; a place of honour will be his without debate.

Cyrus Northrop, a Memoir, was undertaken by Professor Firkins at the request of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota to commemorate the life of the second president of that university. It is a large book which must have consumed a great deal of the time and energy of a man who was never very strong. I do not think that it was an easy book for Professor Firkins to write, but I feel sure that he did not grudge it the time that it took. President Northrop was an admirable man, and the force of his character and of his kindliness was so great that those who had known him felt that he deserved the tribute of a biography. Those who did not know him may feel that the biography is greater than the man. No one would deny that more forcefully than Mr. Firkins. The writing is simple, befitting the subject. The careful distinctions necessary to explain Emerson are not required to explain a man who cared more for beginnings and endings than for middles. Still there are distinctions that reveal the character of Northrop. The statements are as considered here as in any of his other books. Literary references creep in to enliven comparisons and to add force to characterizations. And yet there must be some who, knowing Professor Firkins's opinions and wishing to know more of them, would have preferred some other subject. To me, at least, it is one of his best pieces of writing; that is why I wish that his mature powers had been devoted to someone else, no more worthy perhaps intrinsically, but someone who could have repaid homage with greater renown.

In 1928 Professor Firkins collected several of his short plays and published them under the title of *Two Passengers for Chelsea.* The title play is concerned with some of the vagaries of Carlyle and his circle. The lines are shrewdly discerning and continually pleasant. Lady Harriet Baring, the foil of the story, is the unwitting cause of several agreeable lines. She asks Carlyle how to put meaning and substance into her life. Carlyle replies: "Study German."

Lady Harriet: "I have told you already that I have no time for learning languages."
Carlyle: "No—only time for putting substance into your life. Ye'll do that while ye're putting on your gloves nae doubt."

The one time I met Mr. Philip Hale I mentioned these plays to him. His immediate comment was that they were "damn good". I was glad to hear this comment from the dean of our dramatic critics because I have sometimes felt that the plays were better adapted to the quiet of the study and the cosiness of the hearth than to the boards. That is particularly true of the second play, *The Undying Prince.* In that play many of the living and several of the dead actors who have played Hamlet are got together by a rather tenuous device to talk about him. The talk is superb. It is almost true to say that there is a thought for every epigram and an epigram for every thought; but it is hardly a play. It is splendid criticism, superlative criticism; if the frame is less interesting than the picture we need not examine the frame. One can seldom more nearly approach Lady Harriet's desideratum of putting substance into one's life painlessly than by reading this play. The other plays are of varying quality and interest. They are more easily presentable, nearer the stage; they scintillate and titillate; they are the *jeux d'esprit* of a scholar. If I prefer the first two plays in the book it is because they are nearer the real spirit of the author and because they seem to me to be better representative of his penetrating wit and critical discrimination.

It is a matter of regret to me that a proper consideration of the two recently published volumes of posthumous plays, *The Bride of Quietness* and *The Revealing Moment*, would extend this article to too great a length. They deserve an essay; a sentence or two must suffice. The plays, eleven, in all, are imaginative presentations of literary characters: Merimée, Sophocles and Euripides, Ibsen and Björnsen, the Brontës, the Brownings, and others. A delightful fantasy on the *Grecian Urn*, in blank verse, reanimates the spirit of Keats in animating the characters on the Urn. *The King's Vigil*, a story of Mr. Pepys and Charles II, revives the piquancy and spiritedness of the Restoration and adds to them a quality, rare enough in that period, *true* pungency. The play dealing with Dumas *père* and Dumas *fils* is, in its genre, a masterpiece. It would be invidious if not impossible for me to choose the best play of the group. In a modest way it is like choosing the best of Beethoven's symphonies. Every play vindicates further, if further vindication be necessary, Mr. Firkins's right to be considered as a creative writer of verse and prose which probe with discernment and discrimination. I recommend these books as one of the best introductions to his work and I commend them most heartily to those who knew Mr. Firkins's earlier work and who wish to know its fruition.

Of the books by Mr. Firkins so far published there remains only an essay which he delivered as a lecture, *Man*. It was published posthumously at the request of the organizations before which it was delivered. It is not an *Apologia*; it is not a *Summa*. I do not think, as does the writer of its brief foreword, that it is "the *best* work of one of the great critical minds of our day". (Italics mine.) The best work of a great critic should be found, is to be found, in his critical essays. Mr. Firkins was a man whose principles were as sound as his sensibility was delicate. His allegiance to the best in life amounted almost to ignorance of the sham and tawdry. But he was not a philosophical critic. That is a defect, if it be a defect, which, as I have indicated before, he shared with Emerson. If, then, in this urbane and sensitive essay there is no final formulation of the principles of the good life, those who knew and loved the man will be neither surprised nor disappointed. They will value this essay as another delightful revelation of their friend. In the fullness of his strength and wisdom he wrote this final paragraph, disdainful, as the magnanimous are disdainful, disillusioned perhaps, yet clinging to illusions, tender, with the tenderness of the strong, and always, pervasively, hopeful.

Sometimes with Anatole France, I could "despise man tenderly"; sometimes I think I am fond of him—a little way off; sometimes I think I love him a little without liking him at all. When all is said, the word "human" is a kindly word. It does not acquit, but it convicts and pardons in a breath. Moreover, this cruiser man in his explorations of the planet has fallen half by chance upon a coast which I shall name the higher beauty and virtue. In his later voyages that may not be his goal; it may be only a port at which he touches. But at that port I, a passenger in his ship, if I be strong and wise enough, may disembark. And for that privilege my thankfulness to him shall be eternal.

I must pass over Mr. Firkins's poetry, poetry of genuine worth though hardly large in bulk. It will probably be collected sometime in the future. If his reputation rested on his poetry alone he would still be distinguished. It is additional proof that he was pre-eminently a man of literature. Additional proof is hardly needed; everything he said, everything he wrote, proclaimed it. His subtle taste was well-nigh infallible, and the scrupulousness of judgement which he strove towards, and achieved, is as rare as it is precious. He could sum up a man's life or work in a phrase or an epigram but he never failed to qualify the epigram. "An epigram", he wrote, "is truth in the embrace of a lie." The metaphors which fell from his lips as casually as platitudes fall from the lips of most of the rest of us were all grounded in common sense and wide scholarship. Mr. Firkins knew at least seven languages and, what is noteworthy, the literature of all of them. He was as exact as the so-called "scientific scholarship" demands, and his method was meticulousness itself, but he was not, as that sort of scholarship often implies, a pedant. He gave to his students a deep appreciation of the good and true in literature.

For one of them, at least, he seemed in two ways the embodiment of the literature he loved; he was its genial home, not its sepulchre, or, if one thinks of literature in terms of the lifeless page which must be vitalized, he was its spirit incarnate. He did not talk or write *about* literature, he *was* literature.

It would be pleasant to think that Mr. Firkins will receive from posterity the homage which he received only in part while he was alive; but I am sure that the thought that posterity might forget never disturbed him. Even while he was alive his audience was not large, it could not be large; he never sought public approval. He chose rather to live nobly with the best that mankind offers. Though it is true that there were but a few who recognized his worth, those few numbered among them many distinguished men. What matters it if posterity should forget? Those who were nourished by his thought or heartened by his delightful teaching are his eternal debtors.

The final word cannot be mine. I choose rather to paraphrase a tribute to William Archer which Mr. Firkins wrote in reviewing his biography. Let the words of the kindly man who wrote them pay tribute to his unflinching spirit: one would be slow to predict an enduring fame for Oscar W. Firkins. Genius itself pays dearly for that boon, and Mr. Firkins, as we see, fell short of genius. It would be rash to say that that busy and self-centered person known as posterity would find a place in its notoriously bad memory for him. But we feel, as we close this record of a humane and helpful life, that we could forego genius and dispense with immortality, if we could be an Oscar Firkins.

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The University of Minnesota Press will issue shortly one volume of collected essays and another volume of collected letters. The same press will probably issue a volume, THE VARIETIES OF HUMOUR, which Miss Ina Firkins is completing.

The Restoration of Property

III. *Making a Beginning*

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE practical problem before us is how to effect the beginnings at least of a restoration of property in this society of ours wherein property has been almost destroyed, its principles forgotten, and acquaintance with it lost to the determining majority of our fellow citizens.

The problem is one applying to particular countries –like Britain and the United States–at this particular moment. We have to deal with it in a very different way from what we might adopt in a country where property was still for most men a desire, and for a further sufficient number of men a known and experienced incident.

We can only try to restore it, at first, in some measure–to sow the seeds of such a restoration–in a country which has become one of industrialized capitalism with a determining number of its citizens proletarian–that is, wage slaves.

Now, the obvious intellectual answer to the main question: "How shall we proceed?" is to discover the root of the evil and attack that root.

On the surface the cause of the evil would appear to be unchecked competition, with its destruction of all those safeguards whereby property maintained itself for centuries before the breakdown which began three to four hundred years ago. But we can go deeper than that. The profound, ultimate root of the whole affair is a certain mood—an attitude of mind. Where you have a public opinion supporting well divided property, a state of society which takes well divided property for granted, and therefore a philosophy consonant with well divided property, institutions or customs conservative of property will arise of their own accord. Conversely, attacks upon the small owner, his attempted destruction by the great man, will be defeated.

"Therefore" (says the intellectual observer of the problem), "we can only effect even the beginnings of the mighty change we have in view by going to the very ultimate causes and applying our remedy there. We must change the philosophy, that is, the religion of the society in which we live. A false and poisonous philosophy having produced industrial capitalism with its herd of wage slaves, and having destroyed normal human economic freedom, we must re-establish a sane philosophy—or rather religion—whence right institutions would necessarily proceed." Now, it is this obvious or radical attitude which at the risk of paradox I must beg leave to challenge.

I do not think that in England and the United States as now constituted there is a chance of changing the minds of men from that philosophy whence all these evils have proceeded. Nor do I think that the enormous structure of industrial capitalism, with its establishment, as a dominating social feature, of a millioned proletariat in the place of free citizens, can be at once overset by the propagation of ideals. This attempt at general conversion must go on all the time side by side with the practical tackling of the problem, and such effort at conversion is itself practical but at the moment we cannot expect from it effects on a scale worth noticing.

It is the conviction of this which has decided most of those who have enough historical knowledge and enough moral sense to hate Capitalism and at the same time enough intelligence to despise Socialism, to stand aside or, what comes to the same thing as standing aside, to discuss the abstract doctrine of economic freedom without attempting to issue a concrete program for its recreation. All around us everything works for the destruction of such small proportion of well divided property as remains. Every unit in our social machinery, every habit of our thought takes the present civilization for granted. It takes it for granted that the only solution of our evils is a solution of the same nature as those evils, to wit, the socialist solution. "We have lost", they say, "our economic freedom, and it is impossible to recover it." Or again, "Since there must be monopoly and since the mass of men must be the slaves of monopoly, let us at least put monopoly into the hands of the State and not leave it and its control to a few millionaires".

It is, indeed, true that the position to be attacked is formidable. It is so formidable that anyone may be forgiven for regarding it as not only impregnable, but invulnerable. It is a fortress against which any efforts we may make through attempted reforms of laws here or there, through attempted founding of new institutions here or there, might be compared to the attacking of one of the old-fashioned stone fortresses by unarmed men. They could hardly loosen a stone. They are surely impotent to effect any breach, however slight, in the invincible defence.

But when you are considering how a fortress may be attacked with the means at your disposal it is your first business to ask yourself where its weak points are to be found. The weakness may seem slight, the opportunity of action against such great and highly organized strength may seem negligible, but the very first business is to find out at least *where* there is an opportunity even on a small scale for beginning. In other words the practical thing is not to attempt to undermine industrial capitalism at once and as a whole —that can only be done by a change in the religion or philosophy of the citizens—nor even to attempt to make suddenly a great breach in the defence, for that could only be done with weapons we do not possess, but to seek out those points, however apparently insignificant, in which the reversal of the great process can be sporadically begun.

I would, therefore, in the consideration of a practical program set out the various points of that program in an order almost exactly the opposite of the intellectual order, and would begin with the thing that can at least be done at once with some chance of partial and limited success. The process may be compared to the killing of a tree by one who must attack with instruments too feeble for cutting the tree down, let alone uprooting it, too feeble even for inflicting a serious wound upon its trunk, too feeble for cutting off main branches or perhaps even secondary branches, but *not too feeble for clipping leaves.*

Now, if you cut enough leaves off a tree the tree dies; and a man not having an axe or a saw or a spade may yet with small shears and the slight aggressive power of his two hands begin to destroy, one after the other, the leaves. With this principle in mind and for that purpose I ask what concrete proposals are available. How can we sow fresh seed, from whence the institution of property shall begin to re-arise?

There are main departments in the problem: (*a*) The restoration of the small distributor and the small craftsman, either as individual families or as employers of but few subordinates; (*b*) the division of property in enterprises necessarily large among many holders in sufficient amount; (*c*) the confirming of such wholesome division by institutions which shall maintain it and prevent a recurrent degradation of property into Capitalism.

Before considering these a digression must be admitted upon the function of what is today called "The State"; what used to be called (in the days when men preferred reality) "The King".

We have already said that no such reformation as we are contemplating can be undertaken or continued without the use of State power. And to understand the necessity for this we must get rid of the false category whereby men think in terms of two contrasted methods which they call Socialism and Individualism.

These terms do not indicate a true contrast. There is no such thing as individualism; an action by the State is one thing when it is used to free mankind and to give the citizens economic independence, and an exactly opposite thing when it is used to take that independence away. As men would have put it when property was, indeed, well distributed and when there corresponded to it a strong national monarchy: "The King is there to safeguard the freedom of the small man against the tyranny of the great." That is his function, and there is nothing in common between the exercise of that function and the King turned into a universal owner with all men his slaves—on the contrary, the right conception of kingship as the moderator and preserver of freedom is the very contrary to, and destruction of, the wrong conception of kingship as a universal despotism. We shall find as we proceed in our examination that we cannot follow it for any distance without calling in the powers of the State, to contrast with and as far as possible to destroy the usurped powers of Big Business.

To return, then, to the concrete proposals for a remedy.

If we look at our present industrialized society we perceive that there are two opportunities here, one offering much greater chances than the other, for particular action. The first is the opportunity for restoring the small distributor—the small shopkeeper. The second is the opportunity for restoring the small workshop, the craftsman; and the first is a much more promising opportunity than the second.

As to the restoration of the small distributor (or perhaps we may call it "the saving of him", for he still survives as a type with very numerous examples), there would seem to be two converse economic policies available together. The first is the handicapping of the large distributor, by differential taxation, and the second is using such a system for the artificial economic protection of the small distributor—for all of which, of course, one must go directly contrary to the accepted doctrines of the past, which have led us into the mess in which we are now floundering.

There are three forms of differential taxation on large distribution (I mean, of course, large retail distribution), all three of which must be applied simultaneously.

(1) There must be a differential tax on chain stores, that is, on the system whereby one man or corporation controls a great number of different shops of the same kind. To control two such may involve but a small tax, to control three a larger one in proportion; and so on, with the curve rising steeply until the ownership of, say, a dozen in the territory over which the Government has power becomes economically impossible. The chain store as we now know it has, by the way, not only the evil of destroying the small distributor, but the further evil of controlling wholesale distribution and even production. Suppose, for instance, a system of chain stores acting as fishmongers; a particular group extends until it controls the fishmongering business of, say, half the trade—say, for the sake of precision, 10,000 shops. It has not only destroyed the economic independence of 10,000 men who would have been each the free owner of a fishmonger's business; it has not only substituted for them 10,000 wage-slaves liable to ruin at any moment by the arbitrary decision of an impersonal master who has no human relationship with them; but it is also in a position to dictate prices to the people who send the fish inland from the ports, and to control in great measure the nature and direction of the fisheries. That is manifestly a usurpation of social power and as such should be destroyed.

(2) The department store also must be handicapped by differential taxation, based upon the number of categories with which it deals. One department store combines, let us say, in a particular case, fifty categories; it acts not only as a druggist and a shoe merchant, a wine merchant and tobacconist, but as a stationer, etc. Another deals with seventy categories, another smaller one with only twenty-five. We need a tax differentiated by the number of categories. It will be easy for a small man to add some little extra activity to his main one—he can sell newspapers as well as tobacco, for instance—but when it comes to dealing with more than a few categories, differential taxation should begin, and before it came to dealing with the great number now occupying the chief department stores it should have become prohibitive.

It will be objected, of course, that for such a system you would need an extension of bureaucracy, that the definition of the various categories will be difficult, etc. It is true that in all these reforms we shall have to extend bureaucratic action—in order to prevent ultimately the swallowing up of all our lives by merely capitalist action. The nature of the modern world is such that we cannot escape from being at least helped by the State in our reforms.

In practice the danger is not so great as it seems, for the various forms of retail distribution are fairly well established; there are divisions apparent to ordinary common sense and practice, and this is so true that many of them, as it is, can only come into existence through a licence granted by, or purchased from, the State—tobacconists, for instance. Let that system be extended, and the thing is done.

Here are licences for carrying on a tobacconist's shop and for carrying on a wine shop—let there be also a licence for carrying on a grocery and fishmongering business, or what not, let the licence be granted as a matter of right to any applicant, let its cost be insignificant to the man who applies for only one or two or three licences, but then let it begin to rise more and more steeply as the number of licences applied for increases.

(3) The third form of tax is a tax upon turnover. Your large retail distributor who has only one place of business and who deals with only one kind of business can be, and is, in his way, destructive of the small man just as much as the large distributor who owns chain stores or as a department store. Let there be no tax on turnover up to a certain sufficiently high level, then let it begin and grow steeply after another higher point until it becomes prohibitive.

As to the second, converse, half of this policy. The money raised by the differential tax against large distribution, the money provided by that middle zone between the beginnings of large distribution and the point where the differential tax becomes prohibitive, should be used to protect artificially the small man against the great. It should be used to establish and conserve corporate credit within the guild to which—as we shall describe in a later article—the small distributor should belong; it should even be used, perhaps exceptionally, to subsidize the starting of the small man.

Here it may be objected that in many cases nowadays these reforms would be of no productive effect because the small distributor whom we are trying to save and to increase in number is already a distributor only in name and has already become in practice a servant. This is notably the case with the tobacconists. The wholesale producer and distributor has made of the retail tobacconist nothing more than his agent; he can threaten the small retailer with extinction unless he buys at a dictated price and sells at a dictated price. The capitalist tyranny acts here as it does in the refreshment trade, with the "tied house". The remedy for this is a separate matter which we will deal with later on when we consider the reforms necessary in the control of production and wholesale distribution, but for the moment let the suggested reforms in the matter of retail distribution stand.

The opportunity for restoring the artisan or small employer of craftsmen is, as has been said, far less than that for restoring the small distributor. For this there are two reasons. In the first place, concentrated production under large groups of capital can produce in many categories not *somewhat* cheaper than the individual or the small group, but enormously cheaper —though note that this is not universally true. Next (and this is really more important) fashion and habit have come in to help the evil. The purchaser has lost the habit of, and desire for, choice. I say that this mental and spiritual disease is more important than the merely mechanical fact of cheap production. Such a statement will sound fantastic in the ears of those who are accustomed, as all modern men are, to implied materialism. Yet here, as in every other department, it is the mind that governs and not the material conditions. To see how true this is consider what the effect actually is of choice exercised before our eyes in the modern world and what the effect would be if the use of choice were widely extended.

It is notorious that in certain districts, in certain trades covering great numbers of people, choice is still exercised and has a great effect. For instance, I would quote the demand for Cheshire cheese among the Lancashire operatives. They know what they want and they insist upon it; they will not accept, as will men in the South, a substitute or an inferior article. See also the effect of choice as it is exercised, though in a restricted field it is true, by the middle and upper middle classes in certain categories of furniture and design. Here, as in nearly everything else, the right process has been largely reversed; men take what is imposed upon them and not what they themselves choose. Supply controls demand, and not demand supply. But there is still a sufficient amount of choice remaining, as anyone in the furniture trade will tell you, to produce a considerable effect in the more expensive lines. Whether it would be possible to effect the moral revolution of reviving a habit of choice only experiment can show. It has been done in some categories, notably in architecture; in others it has quite failed. But in most it has not even been tried. With the exercise of choice, of individual will, of preferring this to that and seeing that you get it, you extend the opportunity for the artisan, the individual craftsman, the man who makes a thing to order or one who employs and personally supervises a few.

It must be admitted that there is only a limited field here available for the restoration of economic independence. Concentrated mechanical production will for long necessarily occupy the greater part of the economic area involved in any particular form of manufacture. Still, for the purpose of spreading the moral effect of economic independence, for the purpose of familiarizing modern men before they lose the power altogether with the idea of economic independence, the re-erection even of a number of craftsmen small in proportion to the manufacture of the total amount of a particular product would be of the highest value.

Take, for example, the man who makes simple or more ornate wooden furniture on a small scale with personal knowledge of the methods and without having recourse to concentrated mechanical means. We cannot replace him in his old position of making *all* the furniture needed in the community; he will, for a long time to come, account for no more than a small fraction; but we can easily multiply his present numbers by five, even by ten, perhaps by more than ten, and so set an example of what is desirable in the commonwealth. What is more, we could put before the eyes of people now unaccustomed to them objects of a proper shape, not turned out on a hideous pattern which some capitalist group happens to find the cheapest, but suited to the tastes of the producer and the purchaser.

It must be admitted, of course, that in the beginning an effort of this kind would be the merest nibbling at the edges of a vast field. To our socialist opponents it will seem not only negligible, but ridiculous. We shall probably have a great deal less effect at first than, say, William Morris and his school—for these called themselves socialist and were therefore listened to with some respect by people who had forgotten what property was. But if we could add to the moral effect a definite political weapon—the subsidizing and protecting of the small artisan at the expense of Big Business; the confirmation of the small artisan's position by a legalized guild system (which I touch on in the final article of this series)—we shall be able to do more than the dilettanti of the nineteenth century were ever able to effect, though in their time there was a larger proportion of independent artisans remaining who might still have been saved.

In the case therefore of the artisan, as in the parallel case of the shop, the thing to work for is a revolution of political principle; a new set of ideas and therefore a new set of enactments, the reverse of those which built up industrial capitalism. We need enforceable laws and actual institutions which shall artificially advantage the small distributor against the great and the small craftsman or small user of machinery against the large manufacturer. That is, of course, "uneconomic". In other words, it will cost money. So do the luxuries of the big capitalists cost money today. A well made piece of furniture, neither repulsive nor mechanical in design, will cost more than a piece turned out by mass production. But you are buying something at that price, and it is something well worth having—much better worth having than cheap furniture. It is citizenship, and the escape from slavery.

I am here tempted to repeat the thought that must occur throughout this series: "But all this is moonshine, because there is no condition of mind in a modern industrial State prepared for such a political change." Possibly not. But at any rate those are the lines, and the only lines, along which the change can be effected. The small distributor and the small craft producer could thus be re-established. He would not be made universal; he would at first be only a rather larger minority than the present small minority is; but he would be more secure than he is at present, though he would not at first appear in the community in very much larger numbers, and he would grow. What his presence *would* effect would be an object lesson in freedom and security, and, let us hope, a tendency on the part of his neighbours to change their own condition, where this was possible, from one of wage-slavery to one of independence.

Even were such a policy successful beyond any limits now thought possible, there must remain a very large field, indeed, in which the individual craftsman or the small employer of craftsmen, the individual small shopkeeping family or the modest controller of a very few shops or of a small personnel in one shop, has no place. Vast areas of modern production and exchange will necessarily concern great units and great units alone. How shall these be dealt with? How shall well divided property re-arise in those fields of economic effort where the small unit can in the nature of things have no place?

That is the next question to be answered, and I shall deal with it in the next article of this series, the fourth. In the fifth article I shall ask how a similar policy can be applied to the land; in the sixth and last article I shall deal with the machinery necessary for consolidating the position of small property where it shall have been restored.

(*To be continued*)

REVIEWS

The Nature of Progress

IT MAY seem paradoxical to suggest that the starting-point of human progress", says Mr. Dawson in his present book,* "is to be found in the highest type of knowledge—the intuition of pure being; but it must be remembered that intellectually, at least, man's development is not so much from the lower to the higher as from the confused to the distinct." This statement, from the current sociological standpoint, is revolutionary. But the author backs it up with a firm array of facts. The *essence* of primitive religion is not a belief in ghosts or magic or myths. It is not animism or pantheism or polytheism. It is "an obscure and confused intuition of transcendent being". When this intuition has been educated by long eras of experience and by great centuries of culture it becomes, as in Plato and St. Thomas Aquinas, the clear summit of human knowledge. But from the first it is present, since human nature in all times is radically the same, and it is the ultimate motive of human progress.

This intuition gave rise to Shamanism. The Shaman or primitive Messiah was venerated by the tribe, not primarily as a magician and not at all as the representative of a particular god, but, above all, as a person peculiarly in touch with supernatural life and being. He was succeeded by the organized priesthood and the elaborate myths of the cults of fertility. This cultus may well have been the originator, as it was certainly the inspirer and director, of the art of agriculture, the *sine qua non* of human civilization. Each of the great archaic cultures, from the Egyptian to the Mayan, consisted of a ritual order based upon the agricultural year and embracing the whole life of society. The ritual order was a reflection of the cosmic order on the one hand and, on the other, it was man's organized effort to master his environment, physically and spiritually. It was thus that man found his true position and purpose between the heavens and the earth.

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* PROGRESS AND RELIGION *by Christopher Dawson* (SHEED & WARD. 254 pp. $1.50).

In the archaic cultures the sense of transcendent being was by no means lost, though obscured, and it was brought again to the foreground by the great religions and religious philosophies that rose in southeastern Europe and southern Asia during the first millenium B.C.—Platonism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism. They represent "a change of thought rather than a revolution of material culture", and they "have laid a permanent foundation on which our own intellectual and religious tradition is based". For Christianity emerges from that wonderful period as the chief synthesis and fulfillment of its efforts, drawing together the genius of Europe and the genius of Asia. Broadly speaking, Asia has always tended to lose Nature in the search for God while Europe has tended to lose God in the search for Nature. But Judaism, rising in the borderland between the two continents, conceived of God as indeed transcendent and yet as working out his purposes through human nature and human history. This conception was carried on and developed by Latin Christianity. The "world process" was seen to be a "divine drama". And "the Absolute and the Finite, the Eternal and the Temporal, God and the World were no longer conceived as standing over against one another in mutual isolation. The two orders interpenetrated one another, and even the lower world of matter and sense was capable of becoming the vehicle and channel of the divine life." Hence Christianity, aided by Greek thought, could embody "a genuine spirit of humanism". And the great Catholic synthesis of the thirteenth century was animated by "the desire to show the concordance in difference of the two orders". Aquinas, emphasizing "the autonomous character of natural activity, the province of Reason as distinct from that of Faith, the moral law of Nature as distinct from that of Grace, the rights of the State as distinct from those of the Church", laid the mental groundlines of modern civilization.

The modern doctrine of progress, first clearly formulated by the Abbé de St. Pierre in the early eighteenth century, is a narrow and debased offshoot from Catholic teleology. Inspired by the Christian belief in the high destiny of man, it was able to obtain a wide hold upon Occidental society, conjoining sentimental and mechanistic elements that in themselves are hopelessly contradictory and instable. Today is it clear that "the religion of progress" has run the full gamut of its limited possibilities. Meanwhile it has brought about an abnormal and unprecedented secularization of culture, so that Occidental society has well-nigh lost its inner cohesion.

"Since a culture is essentially a spiritual community", says Mr. Dawson, "it transcends the economic and political orders. It finds its appropriate organ not in a State but in a Church, that is to say a society which is the embodiment of a purely spiritual tradition and which rests, not on material power, but on the free adhesion of the individual mind." At the same time the "church" must exert a fostering and controlling influence upon the other "orders". And just as the archaic "churches" were designed to exert that influence upon agriculture, so Christianity was designed to exert it upon the modern utilization of Nature. "For the progressive intellectualization of the material world which is the work of European science is analogous and complementary to the progressive spiritualization of human nature which is the function of the Christian religion. The future of humanity depends upon the harmony and co-ordination of these two processes. . . ." In short, the "religion of progress" needs to be reabsorbed and repurified in the religion of Christ. Occidental society can be really reintegrated only through the Church which created it–that is, traditional Western Christianity.

Unfortunately, however, the great religious schism of the sixteenth century resulted in Christianity's becoming sectarianized and culturally impoverished. And Mr. Dawson's treatment of that fact is quite inadequate. In dealing with the archaic and ancient cultures he points out that at the very height of their ritual order and intellectual achievement they began to decline through a failure of moral vitality. But he omits this consideration when he comes to the decline of mediaeval culture after the thirteenth century. He passes over that decline. A frank criticism of Roman as well as of Protestant Christianity would have strengthened the total effect of his book. So would a consideration of the efforts of recent theologians on both sides of the line to redefine the Christian "revelation" in a sense at once Catholic and sublimely "natural". That frank criticism and that redefinition are pre-essential to the reunion of Christendom.

So also is the effort that is being made (notably by Irving Babbitt) for a distinct revival of humanistic ethical standards. But Mr. Dawson consistently underestimates the value of ethics as distinct from religion, for example in his treatment of classic Buddhism and Confucianism. He intimates that one who values "the active moral life as an end in itself" is "an Americanist". But alas, the Americanist cannot fully deserve this ironic tribute unless the word "moral" be omitted from it. Moreover, the Americanist values the active life—outward work—not as "an end in itself" but for the sake of emotional excitement and the sense of material power. Whereas American academic humanism is advocating inward work, not as "an end in itself" but for the sake of temperate happiness and the sense of peace. . . . From Mr. Dawson's view of the philosophy of Aquinas, cited above, it would seem to follow that, in succession to the reign of scientific naturalism, a distinct revival of "the moral law of Nature" would now be in order. Without such a revival, the Catholic Christianity of the future which Mr. Dawson hopes for would not be adequately catholic.

However, his book is important and interesting. It is an extraordinarily compressed, clear, and vivid story of human civilization. Its distinction is that its thesis, our rising need of traditional Christianity, is based not on pious conviction but on sociological principles and wide-ranging investigation. Its attitude, apart from the limitations noted, is remarkably catholic. G. R. ELLIOTT

Mark Twain Misconstrued

THERE is abundant justification for a new life of Mark Twain. But Stephen Leacock's *Mark Twain** is not a full-length portrait based upon all the available information; it is only a rough thumb-nail sketch, that could have been written as well ten years ago as today. Mr. Leacock has relied almost entirely upon the compendious but uncritical biography by Albert Bigelow Paine, and the interesting but highly imaginative "psychograph" by Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain.* He has, apparently, not even consulted any of the recent research in the background of American frontier life, or of American humour; research that should change greatly our present conception of Mark Twain as a thwarted artist. It may be, for lack of time, that Mr. Leacock could not have consulted De Voto's excellent study, *Mark Twain's America*, but he could easily have familiarized himself with the many earlier studies that De Voto used so intensively.

The results secured from compounding Paine's personal biography and Brooks's attempt at psychoanalysis are at times startling. Mr. Leacock presents Mark Twain, according to the conventional present-day view, as a fine novelist and humourist who was, at the same time, a frustrated artist. The real man, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, appears but rarely, and that man might have said momentous things to a world sadly in need of them, had he not been stifled by American Victorianism that was far more deadly than the original. The man was swallowed up in the legendary Mark

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* MARK TWAIN *by Stephen Leacock* (APPLETON. $2.00).

Twain, who spoke always in character and who could not escape the deadly label of "humourist" when he most desired to be serious. Mr. Leacock notes, pointedly, that he wrote only of the West, or of Europe as seen through western eyes; not once did he write of the abuses of his own day, or of the New England in which he lived. Yet, though "Mark Twain's nearest and dearest thoughts were spoken only in a murmur, and the world laughed", Mr. Leacock concludes that this was, after all, for the best, since it leaves the priceless heritage of the legendary Mark undefiled and imperishable.

One could hardly ask for a more fundamental misconception either of Mark Twain or of his work. He was, essentially, a child of the frontier. His best novels represent emotion recollected, if not in tranquillity, at least in nostalgia. He was never at home in New England; the only civilization in which he could have lived normally had been destroyed by the Civil War. Yet Mark Twain had so little personal philosophy that he could see in that older civilization only a tyrannical and slave-holding oligarchy, which he could not value. It was not the artist, but the man, who was uprooted. The artist could reconstruct, as no other has ever done, a life that had gone forever; had this life continued, with Sam Clemens as an integral part of it, he might never have been aware that here was literary material, or that he had any reason for writing. Whatever artistic instinct he had was really free only when he wrote of days fondly remembered, but completely gone.

And he did not fail to satirize his own age. True, he did not write directly of New England, but his satires on old England, though circumspect in method, are satires on the nineteenth century as well as satires on the sixth or the twelfth centuries. Always his fundamental purpose was to confront privilege with humanity, and the basic outlines of that injustice are timeless. Apparently he realized that indirect satire may often permeate farther, and in the end be more powerful, than any direct attack can ever be. So he lashed out against tyranny in many ages; but the beast, though it might have many heads, remained always one and unchangeable. He attacked the tyranny of chivalry, of slavery, and of religion; of any organized system except industrialism, one is tempted to say, over the individual. But he was content with the superficial realization that *here* was tyranny; he lacked the disciplined mind and the personal philosophy to examine the true defects of any system. For that reason, his later tracts against religion, which he valued so highly yet feared to publish, seem an old story many times told before ever Mark told it.

Fortunately, the submerged philosopher in him remained for the most part submerged. He had an intuitive gift that no philosophy can equal: the gift of telling a story through characters who live as individuals in their own right.

These individuals were not devoid of humour. To them, as to Mark Twain in his formative years, it was a part of life. But it was something far different from that of the cap-and-bells jester, or the smart wit of sophistication; it gave savour and gusto to every-day affairs. This frontier humour consisted only in part of tall tales. One element, too little recognized, should not be overlooked: these infinite exaggerations were founded, almost always, upon a literal reality, though little of truth would linger in the final legend. Mark Twain made of the tall tale a work of art, but he was master, also, of this literal humour: *Innocents Abroad* contains little else. He saw things exactly as they were, upon a flat surface; the rounded and figurative values that tradition or belief might give to objects had no value in his eyes. He had lived too long among a people who made traditions ever to understand persons who live by them. The realities on which he embroidered grotesque legends were to him realities, and nothing more.

This attitude, I believe, rather than any frustration in a born artist, explains the personal discontent of Mark Twain in his later life. But there were contributing factors. He needed deep friendships, and he received adulation; he valued the individual, and the nation made of him a type. Sympathy, in time of trouble, may be valuable, but it can never replace understanding. And Mark Twain had cut himself away from the life which he understood, from the people who might have understood him.

His humour was little solace, for he could share it only with the world, and not with old cronies. And he lacked a personal philosophy that might have shielded him in loneliness: always, Clemens the man, and Twain the writer, veered with lightning suddenness from buoyant optimism to darkest pessimism, from complete confidence to deepest distrust of himself and of all that concerned him, from heady schemes to save the world to a judgement that men were "the damned human race". He hated every slavery that involved tyranny, from monarchy to slavery; yet, crowning irony, he was completely ensnared by the subtler slavery of industrialism. With easy optimism, he would save a world, one moment, through prosperity, through education, through mental healing, through almost anything; he would damn a race, next day, past all salvation.

But if Mark Twain could not integrate himself to a new life, he could remember, magnificently, an older one. The indirect satires and the direct, vicious attacks seem well on the way to oblivion, but Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer and the days on the Mississippi give evidence of being vital for many generations yet to come. Samuel Clemens might not understand the world, or be able to change it; Mark Twain understood one small portion of it, and that intuitive knowledge has far more value than ratiocination can ever have. When he attempted to widen that horizon, he lost everything; within his narrow limits he was, first personally and later artistically, supreme.

EDD WINFIELD PARKS

Man in the Wilderness

IN *Moral Man and Immoral Society*,* Dr. Niebuhr expounds the thesis that all human collectives–races, nations, and social classes of all kinds–are universally less moral than the individuals who compose them. Individual men may be moral, in the sense that they are able to consider interests other than their own in determining problems of human conduct. But altruism of this kind is well-nigh impossible for social groups, because group action invariably shows less capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to comprehend the needs of others than individual action. Group egoism, as manifested in the emotions of patriotism or class-consciousness, is far more unrestrained than the egoism at work in individual relationships.

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* MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY *by Reinhold Niebuhr* (SCRIBNERS. 277 pp. $2.00)

In the Niebuhr view the explanation is twofold. First, there is no force sufficiently powerful to control the natural impulses by which society achieves its cohesion. Second, the egoistic impulses of individuals are able to achieve a more vivid expression when they are united in a common impulse than when they express themselves separately. This dual cause of the unrestrained behaviour of groups is especially operative in our technological civilization, wherein the circumstances of human living change too rapidly to incline the average man to a reverent acceptance of the traditional ethical values. Groups readily react with brutal selfishness to situations which would call forth moral action in the individual. Dr. Niebuhr finds us, therefore, a restless and unhappy generation, harassed by the urge to correct or to mitigate the evils of group brutality and disillusioned as to the hope of ever really doing so. His chief remedy is that we should strive to hold fast to some of our political illusions.

The most important of these is that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice. It is a very valuable illusion for the moment; for justice cannot be approximated if the hope of its perfect realization does not generate a supreme madness in the soul. Nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant powers and "spiritual wickedness in high places". The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanaticisms. It must therefore be brought under the control of the reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done.

Dr. Niebuhr's philosophy of politics follows upon this. He takes the position of a political realist. He holds that only a romanticist could maintain that a social group ever arrives at a common mind or becomes conscious of a general will without the use of force or the threat of force. In his view the ultimate sanction for political authority, for government, for law, is force and then more force. Our social life today is in a state of war. Power sacrifices justice to peace within the community and destroys peace between communities. We live in an age of social instability.

There are periods of social stability, when the general equilibrium of social forces is taken for granted and men give themselves to the task of making life more beautiful and tender within the limits of the established social system. *The Middle Ages were such a period.* While they took injustices for granted, such as would affront the conscience of our day, it cannot be denied that they elaborated amenities, urbanities and delicate refinements of life and art *which must make our age seem, in comparison, like the recrudescence of barbarism.* (The italics are mine.)

This reference to the Middle Ages and to our own comparative barbarism reminds us of the simile employed by Peter Wust in his *Crisis in the West.* The Munich thinker tells us that the modern man is like a *Steppenwolf* howling forth its hunger and loneliness in the wilderness. Modern man has been cheated out of the very reason for his existence, has been despoiled of all the sacred equipment of civilized being, has been stripped of the trappings of culture so utterly that he is in a state analogous to the *status naturae purae* of scholastic philosophy. Dr. Niebuhr unwittingly emphasizes one aspect of that tragic spoliation: modern man knows nothing of the inner meaning of law, nothing of the natural scope of government, nothing of the ultimate sanction of political authority. For, in this modern age, law is no longer a holy thing nor political authority a sacred trust. Social justice is merely an illusion. Yet, at the very beginning of our civilization we encounter the notion that there cannot be any legitimate authority in social life if it does not represent the principle of justice, whether in law or in government. Obedience and reverence for that law or government are not so much matters of constraint as of conscience; or of reason, if you like the word better. This notion is to be found not only in the teaching of St. Paul but also in Aristotle, Cicero, and the great Roman jurists. Nineteen centuries ago it was the common doctrine of the civilized world.

Patristic literature is rich with it. The Fathers, from Clement of Rome downwards, clearly assert that political authority is from God and draws its compelling strength from that divine origin. Ambrose, writing in the fourth century, teaches that justice builds up the social community and that injustice destroys it; he even goes so far as to say that the ruler is God's minister when he uses his authority well. In other words, ruler and ruled alike are bound to the law of justice by the ultimate sanction of the principle imbedded in the very scheme of things, namely, the will of God.

The same thought is found in scholasticism. It is the teaching of Aquinas that political authority is grounded immediately on nature and remotely and ultimately on the Supreme Being. Indeed Aquinas draws a sharp distinction between righteous rule and tyrannical rule: "A tyrannical rule is not just, for it is not directed to the common good but to the private advantage of the ruler; therefore, a revolt against this rule has not the nature of sedition." But the scholastics were not content to define the functions of the ruler. They also analysed the duties of the citizens. Just as the ruler has the right to govern, to make laws, to regulate the social life of the community, so there are correlative duties to be observed by the citizens. Those duties include obedience to the laws, respect for the governing authority, and co-operation in the direction of the general good.

For fourteen hundred years this concept of political authority held unchallenged sway in our social life. For five centuries it has been gradually losing ground. Few men have told the story of that loss as logically as Peter Wust, who sees history as a drama of the human spirit, a *motio metaphysica voluntatis*, a passionately stirring tragedy of the will. He takes four men as typical of four critical phases of our civilization.

First, there is the man of classical antiquity: a man naturally obedient, naturally submissive to the sacred canons of being, devoted to the worship of his gods, and finding in his natural religion an adequate solution for the problems of his life. Then, there is the Christian man, to whom has been given the concept of the God-Man: inheriting the childlike, cosmic realism of the Greek, he did not destroy it but rather completed it by incorporation with a supernatural realism hitherto unknown. These two men were strangely alike. They both possessed a spiritual outlook, although their religions were as far apart as the natural and the supernatural. But the psychological outgoing, the spiritual drive, the mental attitude that Wust calls the *pietas*, all this made them kin.

Third, there emerged the Renaissance man, substituting secular culture for spiritual worship. In the opinion of Wust, this man began the mischief by his shift of the center of gravity. The man of the Renaissance made the life of faith a secondary thing and directed all his energies to the life of secular culture. Gradually the concept of the Supreme Being recedes and the tremendous supernatural substance is beginning to be lost. Thus we arrive, by slow stages, at the fourth type: the man despoiled of all the metaphysical concepts of righteous and orderly living.

This is the modern man. He is a man who has foresworn what the mediaevalist lived by and who has forgotten what the Greek knew, namely, the notion that in the social organization of his life spiritual values must come first. He does not even dream of the ancient truth that the first thing to be considered in the arrangements of any social order is the quality of life which men live. He has lost not merely a philosophy or a science or an ethics. He has lost a very way of ordered life. This is the terrifying lesson of Dr. Niebuhr's book with its biting analysis of the social disorder in which we live today. Although the book is called, by way of sub-title, a study in ethics and politics, the author never digs down very far beneath the facts. He never reaches their philosophical implications. If he sees their significance at all, he sees it as through a glass darkly. Yet, despite a faulty system of ethics which takes no account of an objective standard of right and wrong and which seems to hold no welcome for an immutable code of good and evil; despite his divorce of politics from ethics; despite his confusion of the coactive expedients of government with the ultimate sanction of government; despite all this and much else besides, he is struck by the contrast between the contented life of the Middle Ages and the anarchical conditions of our modern life.

He recognizes the fact that the Middle Ages was a period of stability in social life. He fails to see the reason for that fact. He fails to see the metaphysical principles from which once sprang in serious reality the mode of life of the entire civilization of the West. We cannot, of course, regard the mediaeval phase of our civilization as the model to which modern society should rigidly conform. But the mediaevalists had something that our generation sorely needs. They had a dynamic spiritual force which strove to bring every side of a man's life—personal, familial, social, and political—into vital relation with reality.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

A Philosopher of History

MR. DAWSON's latest book* is a collection of essays and lecture material, some of which is new, and some reprinted, but all of which is pertinent to Mr. Dawson's major thesis as a commentator on social and cultural history: that religion is the formative element in any culture. Naturally such a view is bound to be intensely irritating to anyone who subscribes to the rationalist-humanitarian-materialist philosophy which distinguished the nineteenth century and which still holds sway over the minds of most publicists and professional philosophers, especially here in America. And yet it is a view for which so much evidence can be found, and has, indeed, been found, that it must be given serious consideration.

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* ENQUIRIES INTO RELIGION AND CULTURE *by Christopher Dawson* (SHEED & WARD. 347 pp. $3.00)

Mr. Dawson's audience is far too small in America. He has his admirers, but they are admirers who have found him only by luck, or by some casual reference in their reading. The establishment of his resourceful British publishers in this country will undoubtedly discover for him a definite American public. That this volume will be sent out to the two thousand-odd members of the Catholic Book of the Month Club is already a good omen.

The first of the book's three sections deals with the intellectual and spiritual forces which at present govern mankind. One chapter from this section was published in the first number of THE AMERICAN REVIEW, and concerns Bolshevism. There are supplementary chapters on Fascism, the English Tradition, and the passing of industrialism.

The second section of the book is devoted more specifically to a consideration of the relation between religion and culture. It begins with a brilliant analysis of the periodicity of great cultural movements, an analysis which is so condensed that it defies summary.

It leads to the conclusion that we are on the threshold of the period of maturity of our culture, during which the Renaissance quarrel between science and rationalism on the one hand and religion on the other should achieve a new synthesis, but in terms of a world-wide order. After this *esquisse* for a philosophy of history, Mr. Dawson gives more detailed consideration to the place of religion and of morals in culture, pausing a moment to consider the apparent "mystery" of the non-religious Chinese civilization. He ends this second section with a luminous chapter called "Rationalism and Intellectualism", drawing a distinction which the present reviewer has never seen more clearly set forth.

The third section of the book is devoted to special studies of the inner life of religion. An introduction to Christian mysticism is found in the mysticism of Islam, from which may safely be drawn a number of morals which might not be admitted in the Christian case by those who are in disagreement with Mr. Dawson. Indeed Islamic mysticism seems to make clear, in its historic disintegration, the need for the Doctrine of the Redemption and for asceticism if the mystical life is not to become mere quietism, or vaguely emotional pantheism. Mr. Dawson proceeds from this introduction to state his views of the mystical process in Christianity. Here he follows the Greek Fathers and Saint Augustine rather than Saint Thomas, although he makes clear that there is more than a possibility that Saint Thomas would have found validity in the position Mr. Dawson prefers: namely, that knowledge of God is a latent yet ever-present faculty in the human soul, a form of intuition which may be cultivated, and which is merely the foundation from which all men may come to know God. From this Mr. Dawson proceeds to discuss certain allied subjects: Saint Augustine, Christianity and Sex, Religion and Life. His final chapter, "Nature and Destiny of Man", is a masterly piece of spiritual analysis.

Enquiries into Religion and Culture marks a milestone in modern cultural history: fifty years ago no one would have thought it possible that any scholar or thinker of Mr. Dawson's ability could be an adherent of the ideas which he so ably expounds, and expounds not in any spirit of controversy, but merely as an historic analysis of what seems to him the truth.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

The King and the Counting-House

R. McNAIR WILSON is a Scottish medical man whose studies in the history of Western Europe during the Napoleonic period have led not only to five noteworthy biographical works—on Napoleon himself, on Josephine, on Madame de Staël, on Napoleon's mother, and, most recently, on the King of Rome*—but to the formulation of a theory of the relation between kingship and a just financial system which is a significant contribution to modern political and economic thought.

In his five biographies, Mr. Wilson has increasingly tended to emphasize his theory a little too artlessly—though not for that reason the less accurately. Hence his new life of Napoleon's son, published as one of the Appleton Biographies, will no doubt seem a tendentious little work; and the unprepared reader, expecting an introduction to the pathetic history of the child who was born to inherit the throne of France and who died a dissatisfied Austrian archduke, might well protest that he had instead been given a pamphlet against money-lending in the early nineteenth century. One is taken aback, for instance, when Mr. Wilson makes Napoleon, walking distractedly to and fro before a window in the Tuileries while his wife is in labour and a still-born child is expected, say to himself as the people of Paris murmur in the streets below:

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* THE KING OF ROME *by R. McNair Wilson* (APPLETON. 160 pp. $2.00)

> How good was this people, how faithful. They, at least, did not reject the nationalism for which he stood against the tribalism of finance. . . . Paris did not call him usurper of the Bourbons' throne as London did. The Bourbons had their headquarters in London, like the bankers. . . . What a calamity that his reign should have coincided in point of time with the decline of the English monarchy and the consequent increase of the power of finance in that country!

This sort of thing is obviously not very convincing in a biography, particularly in a biography of only 160 pages, and to judge Mr. Wilson's thesis on this basis would be an injustice. For when it is stated as a thesis and not as an incidental to biography, as Mr. Wilson has done in another book not yet published in this country,* the thesis becomes quite a different thing: expanded, documented, offering a point of view

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*MONARCHY OR MONEY POWER *by R. McNair Wilson* (EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE) which permits an interpretation of modern European history strikingly refreshing by comparison with the school-book historians, and above all immensely suggestive where it concerns the economic, social, and moral problems of today.

As he presents them in *Monarchy or Money Power*, Mr. Wilson's main contentions, inadequately summarized, are three. The first is that the poverty which has periodically afflicted the larger part of the people of Western Europe and America since the middle of the eighteenth century is largely the work of a sometimes unself-conscious but always self-seeking and irresponsible Money Power (constituted of those, chiefly bankers, who own gold or are empowered to create credit). The second is that the only effective and lasting alternative to the control of the people's material condition by the Money Power is the existence of a true Monarch, powerful enough to manage credit, stabilize prices, and thereby see to it that the people as a whole are assured of a fair return in goods for their produce or their labour. The third contention, which is brought forward in proof of the first two, is that the history of Europe since, roughly, 1750, is the history of the conflict between the two warring principles of Monarchy and Finance.

To summarize his contentions thus baldly is as unfair to Mr. Wilson as it is to the reader. In this form they can carry no conviction to one not already well on the road to conviction; whereas his book itself repays the careful attention of all who feel concern over the manifest injustice brought about by our present economic system and who are not completely blinded by the collectivist dream.

While the book must be read as a whole to be treated fairly, it may not be amiss, by a few quotations, to indicate the transformation which European history undergoes when examined in the light of Mr. Wilson's thesis. Louis XIV, for instance, becomes a close approach to the ideal of kingship, demanding service in return for privilege and demanding it from the money-lenders as well as from the aristocracy and the court. As to the increasing grip of the Money Power upon the State, Louis wrote:

> From three quarters I reduced to one half all the new mortgages which were charged upon my revenue, which had been effected at a very extortionate rate during the War and which were eating up the best of my resources. The officials of the corporations had acquired the greater part of these mortgages and looked upon it as good business to treat their debtor as harshly as possible in his most vital interests. This action of mine was perfectly just, for a half constituted a substantial premium on the sums advanced. . . . It was just that public utility should take the place of all other considerations and reduce everything to its legitimate and natural order. . . . The interests of the State must be the first consideration. . . . The good of the State makes the glory of the King.

Turgot, in Mr. Wilson's interpretation, becomes the champion of domestic commerce and industry against the Money Power and foreign trade. In urging economy and discouraging further borrowing from the bankers, he warned Louis XVI that "so long as finance [meaning the finances of the King] shall be continually subject to the old expedients in order to provide for State services, your Majesty will always be dependent upon financiers, and they will ever be the *masters*, and by the manoeuvres belonging to their trade they will frustrate the most important operations. . . ." On the other hand Necker, a banker whose interests were linked with those of bankers in England, Holland, and Switzerland, is presented as manoeuvering always in the interest of the loanholders, and ultimately outmanoeuvred by the forces he called forth to defeat his opponents. Napoleon represents the return to true Monarchy; he held, says Mr. Wilson, that "money had come to the rescue of privilege, and by destroying the Throne had prevented the real Revolution. He himself was determined to carry through this real Revolution by re-establishing the Throne. That, as he knew, meant curbing the power of Money, which would certainly, unless he was prepared to come to terms, offer him a bitter opposition". Napoleon himself clearly stated his opposition to loans on the ground that he wanted to withhold from finance the power to embarrass the Government as it had embarrassed the Government of Louis XVI; "Money", he declared, "has no motherland; financiers are without patriotism and without decency; their sole object is gain." The final ironic proof of these statements came when, after the return from Elba, he was forced to borrow from the bankers at last, and the money required to equip the French army that fought the British at Waterloo was cheerfully supplied by the City of London.

To turn to more recent history, let us see how Mr. Wilson views the palliative efforts which had their beginnings in England in the Social Reform movement. Much of what he says applies with equal force to the collectivist solutions being proposed today.

> The state [says Mr. Wilson] would be fairy godfather to the "poor". Having robbed them of their dignity as men and Christians, by handing them over to the mercy of Money, it would educate their children, provide them with doctors, and, if Money no longer needed them, even go so far as to fill their empty bellies. This was the British Parliament's answer to Mammon, and it was an immoral answer. . . . Social reform, far from being a blessing to anybody, was a betrayal by Parliament of the nation. It represented the price paid by the Money Power for the right to rob the King's Englishmen not only of the fruits of their labour, but also of their dignity as men and Christians, of their office as fathers and husbands, and of their qualities of independence and courage which are the real wealth and credit of this Kingdom.

In his consideration of the loans by which the British Government financed its activities in the World War, Mr. Wilson again approaches the heart of his thesis. This money, to the extent of some seven billion pounds, he argues should have been created by the King as his just prerogative, with no interest to pay upon it; actually, it was raised by loans of money created directly or indirectly (in the form of credit) by the bankers, for which creation the Government and ultimately the people had to pay the bankers interest. Thus:

> The King was forced . . . to pledge the products and labour of his people for generations in exchange for that which belonged properly to himself [The power to create money]. . . . The credit behind these loans from the banks . . . was the nation, King and people, the courage and heroism of those about to die, . . . the leadership of the masters of agriculture and industry,

the skill of British craftsmen, the machinery and plant bought by service, the stock of goods produced by work, the land, England herself. It was this credit of which a free gift was made to the Money Power in order that that Power might lend it back again to its owners at immense profit. . . . The huge burden of debt, which is called the War Loans, is chiefly a debt by the King to the Money Power not for goods or services received, but for the exercise by that Power of the King's own prerogative.

Anyone whose thinking has led him some distance along these lines will readily recognize the ring of Mr. Wilson's words, and may well recall the voice of another Briton who also protested, with some effectiveness, against the beginnings of the same abuse:

> This monstrous thing, the usury, or funding system . . . the scheme of *borrowing*, of *mortgaging the taxes*, and of *pawning the property and labour of future generations*. . . . The sum at *first borrowed* was a mere trifle. It deceived by its seeming insignificance. But, it was very far from being intended to stop with that trifle. The inventors knew well what they were about. Their design was to mortgage, by degrees, the whole of the country, all the lands, all the houses, and all other property, and even all labour, to those who would lend their money to the State. . . . The scheme, the crafty, the cunning, the deep scheme, has, from its ominous birth, been breeding swarms of Jews, Quakers, Usurers of every description, feeding on the vitals of the country; till, at last, it has produced what the world never saw before; *starvation in the midst of abundance*!

So wrote William Cobbett in 1825; Thomas Jefferson had uttered much the same warning in the preceding century. It is for this problem of the disastrous results of the lending of privately created credit at interest, which still remains not only in England and America but in every industrialized country a problem central to the welfare of the people, that Mr. Wilson offers a solution.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

The American Revolution

THERE are still a great many persons unacquainted with the discoveries of recent scholarship concerning the American Revolution. Our school text books are not yet as fair-minded and impartial as they might be. It is therefore a useful book that Mr. Preston has just published,* for he has presented the facts in an informal and eminently readable style calculated to appeal to a wider audience than such men as S. G. Fisher, Van Tyne, and W. C. Abbott. Indeed if there is one trouble with Mr. Preston's work it is that he has so much fictionalized his story that he is occasionally led into statements which seem close to the very polemics he condemns in the older historians. He says, for example, in discussing the treaty between France and America and the former's recognition of American independence, that these documents constituted "a charge of political dynamite that was to overturn two governments and send broken fragments of autocracy crashing into space for the next hundred and fifty years". This is certainly not the statement of an impartial man, and it sounds a good deal like tweaking the lion's tail. But apart from occasional lapses of this sort, Mr. Preston takes only very minor liberties in his historical narrative; much that may seem fictional to the general reader is really well documented, and the book can be most warmly recommended for anyone who finds history tedious and needs to be set right about our glorious past. Not by any means the least of the author's contributions is an extremely able critical bibliography for those who would pursue the subject further.

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* REVOLUTION: 1776 *by John Hyde Preston* (HARCOURT, BRACE. 440 pp. $2.90)

It is perhaps significant of Mr. Preston's lack of philosophic interest—a lack which in this particular case is almost an asset—that he does not even mention in his bibliography a book which every one interested in the history of America should read, if only to disagree with it: Christopher Hollis's *The American Heresy*. Yet after all the function of the author with a gift for vivid writing who treats a subject of this sort for the benefit of the man in the street, and does a careful job from the point of view of scholarship, is most valuable. And this is what Mr. Preston has done in *Revolution: 1776*.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE